


BV  
4160  
.W45  
E49

With love, & in memory of  
our great days in Wells.

A. McLeod Murray  
Vice. Principal

John A. Ransbotham  
Chaplain.





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2019 with funding from  
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

THE HISTORY OF  
WELLS THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE







*Photograph by Dawkes & Partridge, Wells*

WELLS FROM THE NORTH-EAST

*Frontispiece*

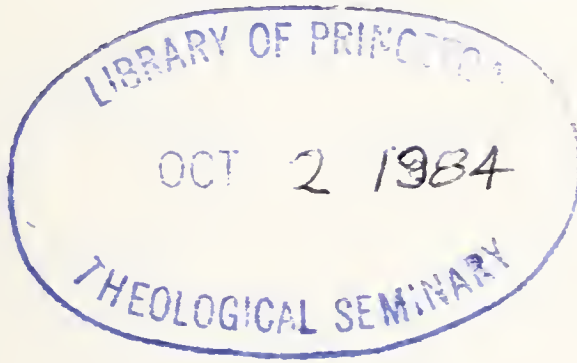


# THE HISTORY OF WELLS THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

BY THE  
VEN. E. L. ELWES, M.A.

CHANCELLOR OF CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL, FORMERLY VICE-PRINCIPAL  
OF THE COLLEGE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
THE RIGHT REV. E. C. S. GIBSON, D.D.  
LATE BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER



LONDON  
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING  
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE  
NEW YORK AND TORONTO : THE MACMILLAN CO.

1923

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN,  
RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,  
PRINTERS, BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

## INTRODUCTION

THE system of Theological College training for Graduate Candidates for Holy Orders in the Church of England is so firmly established now that it is not always realised that up to 1839-40 the Church was content to go on without making any special provision for the training of its Candidates beyond that involved in the possession of a degree at one of the Universities, and by attendance at courses of Divinity Lectures by the Theological Professors in them. Wells was one of the pioneers of the new movement which began with the foundation of Chichester, with Charles Marriott as its first Principal, in 1839. The establishment of these Colleges was a bold venture, but it was amply justified by results, and the whole Church has benefited by it. I have sometimes wondered whether, if Pinder had failed at Wells, Bishop Wilberforce would have ventured on the foundation of Cuddesdon in 1854, or whether other Colleges founded later on would have come into existence. But it was only very slowly that the Theological Colleges won their way to general recognition. It was long before the Bishops generally thought of requiring College testimonials from them, or even of making any inquiries of their Principals as to the character and conduct of the men who were trained in them. Moreover, in their early days they had to meet a good deal of actual prejudice. They were not merely regarded as unnecessary, but the very idea that University

training required in any way to be supplemented was widely regarded as a slur upon the old Universities; and it is said (I believe with truth) that certainly one Head of a College at Oxford refused to sign College testimonials for any man who went from there to a Theological College. My own personal recollections go back to the days when a Canon of Wells, when called to pray in the Bidding Prayer "for the Theological College established in this place," declined to use the ordinary form, and would only describe it as the "theological institution" (or, as he pronounced it, "institootion"), and familiarly spoke of the students as "Mr. Pinder's young men." I also recall how, when a man who had just taken his degree at one of the Universities went to say good-bye to the Head of his College, and told him that he was going to Wells, the Head presented him with a copy of a published sermon which he had preached *against* Theological Colleges! However, in spite of dislike and prejudice and the absence of support from authority, the Theological Colleges grew and prospered. Men came to them because they felt that they wanted something which the Universities could not, or at any rate did not, supply.<sup>1</sup> Men came and found in them what their spiritual life needed. The best—indeed almost the only—advertisement that the Colleges ever had was found in the character of the men who went forth from them, and in the testimony of these men to the blessings that they had received. Men went to their curacies in town and country, and, knowing by experience what

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that Professor J. J. Blunt's *Lectures on the Obligations and Duties of a Parish Priest* (a book which in its day exercised a wide influence on the clergy) were not delivered at Cambridge till 1856. Evans' *Bishopric of Souls* (a work to which Bishop Lightfoot constantly expressed his obligations) came earlier, being published in 1842, but this had no connection with either of the Universities.



they owed to them, they advised other men to follow their example; and so gradually the prejudice died down, and the Colleges won their way to general recognition.

There are no survivors now of the students of the earliest days of Wells, and indeed the number of those who were there under its first Principal (who only resigned his post in 1865, after twenty-four years of devoted labour) is rapidly diminishing; and so it has been thought well that, before the generation of those who were personally acquainted with its founders and earliest students has quite passed away, some record should be committed to paper of the circumstances under which the College was founded and of its history from its earliest days. No one is better qualified to tell the story than Chancellor Elwes, who has been connected with the College more or less closely since 1871, and who yields to none in his interest in and affection for it. Hence the existence of this little volume. Mr. Elwes has asked me to write a few lines of introduction to it, and I have been glad to comply with his request, and most heartily commend his record of its history, more especially to old Wells men, who will, I am sure, love to refresh their memories of what so many among them look back to with thankfulness as one of the happiest and not least profitable times in their lives.

EDGAR C. S. GIBSON, Bp.





# CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	V
I. EARLY DAYS . . . . .	I
II. IN QUIETNESS AND CONFIDENCE . . . . .	12
III. THE TRIENNIAL FESTIVALS . . . . .	29
IV. MR. GIBSON, PRINCIPAL 1880-1895 . . . . .	44
V. PROSPEROUS TIMES . . . . .	62
VI. PEACE AND WAR . . . . .	78
VII. FINANCE . . . . .	101
ROLL OF HONOUR . . . . .	114
INDEX : : : : : . . . . .	115



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
WELLS FROM THE NORTH-EAST	<i>Frontispiece</i>
PORTRAIT OF CANON PINDER . . . . .	2
PORTRAIT OF CANON CHURCH . . . . .	12
INTERIOR OF THE COLLEGE LIBRARY . . . . .	30
PORTRAIT GROUP OF BISHOP GIBSON AND CHAN- CELLOR ELWES . . . . .	44
THE VICARS' CLOSE, LOOKING NORTH . . . . .	62
THE VICARS' CLOSE, LOOKING SOUTH . . . . .	78
INTERIOR OF THE COLLEGE CHAPEL . . . . .	102





# THE HISTORY OF WELLS THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY DAYS

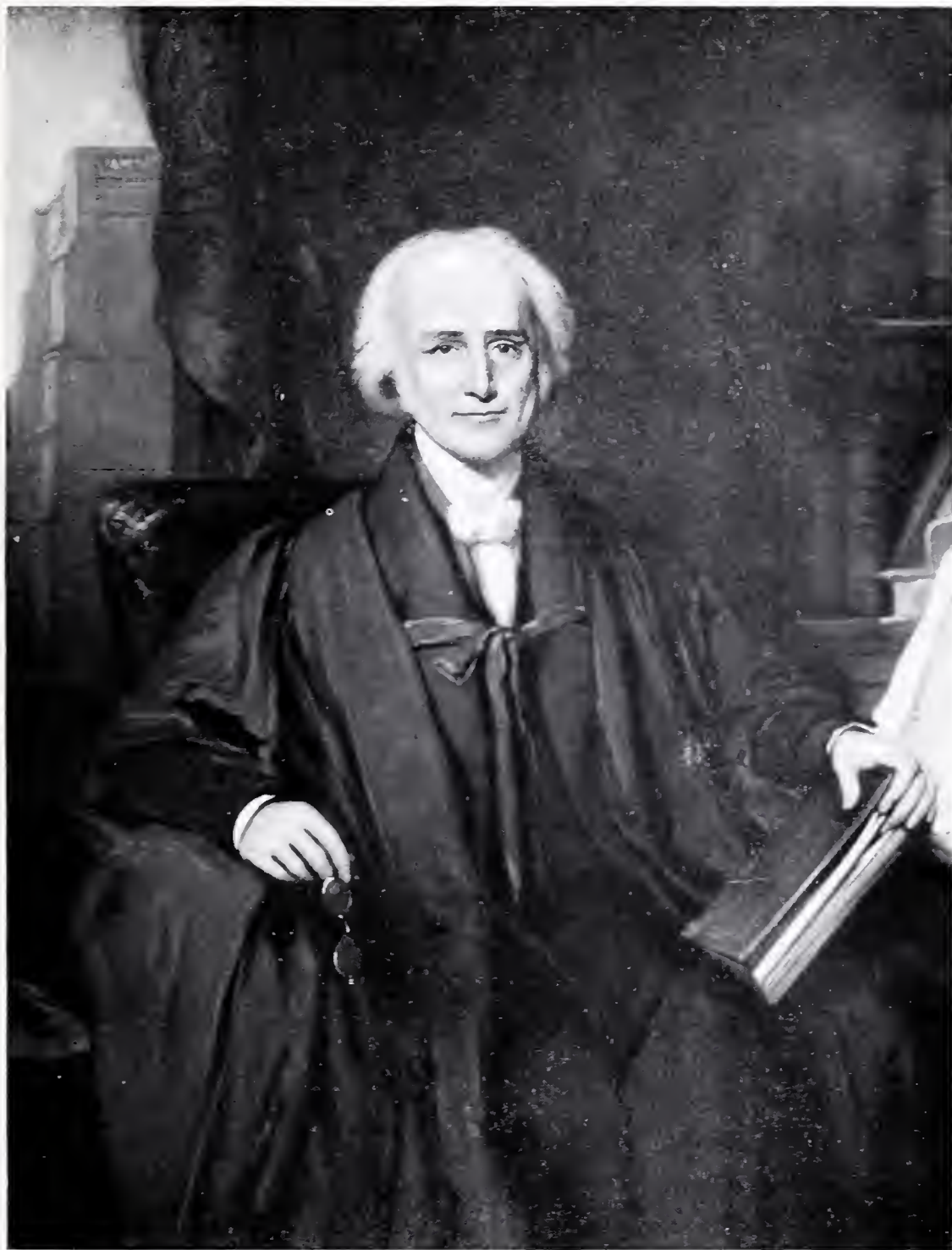
THOSE men who, in 1840, combined in the act of founding Wells Theological College were statesmen of a far-seeing kind. A similar College had been set on foot a few months before at Chichester under the guidance of Archdeacon Manning,<sup>1</sup> with Charles Marriott as the first Principal. But the idea of offering to young graduates such a course of training for their future life in the Ministry of the Church was a new one, and one which was not altogether free from suspicion. It is therefore of great interest, as revealing to us an example of the way in which

<sup>1</sup> The first Principal of Chichester Theological College, as stated above, was the very able and eminent Charles Marriott, Fellow of Oriel. Dean Church, writing to F. Rogers on November 1, 1840, tells his friend that the first Principal might have been a man of a very different stamp. "What do you think" (he says), "of the Bishop of Chichester offering the Principalship of the Theological College to Golightly? It was intended to be done quietly, but Golightly told Eden, and Eden told it me across the table at dinner, and then recollected that it was a secret. Golightly on mature deliberation refused, alleging that people here would not send him any disciples; and he walks about looking as pleased as if he had refused a piece of preferment" (*Life and Letters of Dean Church*, p. 26).

## 2      **The History of Wells Theological College**

at that period the minds of earnest men were at work for the revival of the activities of the Church of England, to record the story of the first inception of the idea as told in 1920 by Bishop Gibson of Gloucester.

“ The story (he says) as I heard it in 1880 from the lips of Mr. F. H. Dickinson, then an old man, and one of the Trustees of the College, was this. Some time, shortly before 1840, when he became Archdeacon of Chichester, the late Cardinal Manning was staying with Mr. Dickinson at King Weston, and they came over to see the Cathedral and called on Brymer, the Archdeacon of Bath, whom they found anxious to do something for the good of the Church, but he did not know what. He spoke of possibly giving £1000 to the Cathedral Library in the hope of benefiting the clergy of the Diocese; whereupon Manning said, ‘ Why don’t you do as we are doing at Chichester and start a Theological College for training clergy?’ At that time the Rev. J. H. Pinder, who had been Principal of Codrington College, Barbadoes, was living in Bath as Principal of Partis College. He was therefore well known to Archdeacon Brymer, and his name at once occurred to the Archdeacon as a possible Principal. So his reply to Manning was, ‘ I’d gladly give £1000 if I could see Pinder set up here as Principal of a College.’ Nothing more was said at the time, but Dickinson did not forget the words, and a few days afterwards he walked over again to Wells and asked Brymer if he really meant what he had said, as, if so, he would like to join him. They then considered the matter and consulted with Chancellor Law and Lord John Thynne, then, I think, Vicar of Street. These four men agreed together to find the necessary funds, and, with the consent of the Bishop, arranged for Pinder to come as Principal and to live in the house at the East End



*Photograph by Dawkes & Partridge, Wells*

CANON J. H. PINDER

FIRST PRINCIPAL OF WELLS

*From the Portrait in the College Library*





of the Cathedral, which was leased by the Bishop to Chancellor Law for a nominal sum, and he in turn leased it to the Trustees of the College."

It was a courageous quest on which these four earnest men were launching out. The idea was not only a new one, but it was connected in men's minds with those "Tractarian" ideas which at that time were matters of the keenest controversy. It will be remembered that Keble's famous sermon on National Apostasy was preached at the Oxford Summer Assizes in 1833, and that Newman considered that sermon to have been the original stimulus of the Oxford Movement. Between that date and the publication of Tract 90, in February 1841, the Church of England was in a state of ferment. And while many, both lay and clerical, were considering what they could do to renew the life of the Church, there were others who connected their doings with names and views which were regarded with distrust. Thus the establishment of such a College was associated with the working of the new leaven in the Church, and its teaching of "Theology" was considered likely (not perhaps without reason) to lead its students on to the opinions of Pusey and of Newman.

There is some confusion as to the precise date of the formal inauguration of the College. Canon Church in a sermon preached in Wells Cathedral, on February 2, 1907 ("The Day of Small Things," printed by Woodhams, Wells), states that "On May 1, 1840, a little company met in the Chapel in the Vicars' Close; the Bishop (Law) and a few friends, the Principal and three students, first-fruits of the coming harvest." It appears, however, from the earliest Students' Matriculation Book, that the first student was not admitted till May 4, 1840, the second on June 22, the third on July 3, the fourth on July 29, and the fifth not till August 24. It is



## 4      **The History of Wells Theological College**

probable, therefore, that Canon Church's story is less correct than the statement in the College Calendar for 1877, which says, "On the 3rd of August, 1840, at 7 a.m., five students being then in residence (though as a matter of fact there can only have been four), Chancellor Law, Archdeacon Brymer, Canon Barnard and others met in the Chapel at the end of the Vicars' Close: after Morning Prayer and a sermon by the Principal, an address was delivered by the Bishop of the Diocese." Among those "others" who were present we may count with some certainty Mr. F. H. Dickinson, Prebendary Horner, the Vicar of Mells, and Lord John Thynne, the Vicar of Street. Nor should the names of the "students" be omitted, for they deserve some credit for their courage in being the first to join so novel an institution; they were Foster, D'Aguilar, Milward and Bedford.

It may be worth while to recall some of the words used by the Principal on the occasion of that inaugural Service: "How great need have we (he said) of prayer for that strength in which we are all so wanting; of the daily intercession of you, my brethren, in our behalf, that this institution may bring forth fruit to the glory of God and the strengthening of Christ's Church! . . . And, if it be found that Sacred Study advances among you, if it be found that your daily going up to the Temple at the hour of prayer, your visiting the poor and sick and your life here, is perceptibly moulding the character into that of a true shepherd of Christ's flock, what joy will these things occasion to the friends and promoters of this School of the Prophets, how will misunderstanding as to its character and tendency vanish away, and this early attempt may lead to larger and more organised Colleges, if not in each Diocese, perhaps in neighbouring Dioceses, working harmoniously together."

It would appear from these closing words of Canon Pinder that the immediate intention of the Founders was to make the College primarily Diocesan in its character, or, in other words, to train clergy chiefly if not exclusively to minister in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The College Records tell us, that out of the first twenty men who were ordained from Wells, all but four received titles in the Diocese. It was, however, impossible for a Diocese which contains few large towns to claim all the Deacons whom the College sent out, especially when College-trained men were rare: and, before many years had passed, Wells lost any such Diocesan character as it may at first have possessed.

The College owed much to its first Principal, Mr. Pinder, who directed its affairs during the earliest twenty-five years of its existence, years of such anxiety and labour as were inseparable from the beginnings of an enterprise so full of venture and so much opposed by prejudice and suspicion. It must be remembered that the fact of there being then no other similar Colleges in existence made it impossible for the promoters to seek for a Principal among men who had already held subordinate positions in other Institutions of the same kind. There were then no training grounds such as at present exist where men could gain experience in the work of a Theological College. And it may be taken as a remarkable fact, and as one which must be reverently regarded as an answer to the prayers of the Founders, that, just at that time, there should have been a man available and ready for the post who was so eminently fitted both by character and scholarship to fill the office of Principal of the College.

It has already been said that by the generous co-operation of the Bishop and Chancellor Law a house had been secured for the use of the Principal.

## 6      The History of Wells Theological College

With the exception of certain intervals, that house has been the residence of the Principal ever since. It is that picturesque building which, according to Parker (*Ecclesiastical Buildings of Wells*, plate xxi), was originally the house of the choir-master of the Cathedral, and dates from about 1480. Later it became one of the "Ribs" (as they are called) which the Bishop has the power to grant to any Prebendary whom he may desire to call into residence. The position of the house is unique and full of charm. On the south, between the house and the Palace, are the tranquil pools in which there bubble up the "wells" which give the name to the city, while on the west is the great "massif" of the Cathedral Church itself. At a later date, when Principal Church occupied the house, a child, with characteristic simplicity, described the position well when he said, "How kind it is of Mrs. Church to allow the Cathedral to stand on her lawn!" This is the spot—so peaceful, so beautiful, and so impressive—which many generations of Wells men will associate with interviews and conferences which have been full of momentous interest to themselves. Here lived, after Pinder, Church and Gibson, Currie, Goudge and Parsons, and hither Mrs. Church, whom many generations of students will remember with affection and respect, returned to end her days in the home of her early married life.<sup>1</sup>

As already mentioned, the opening Service on August 3, 1840, was held in the Chapel at the Northern end of the Vicars' Close. This was lent for the occasion by the Vicars Choral. But it was not the custom at that time to use that Chapel for the regular College Services. The students at that date were called upon to attend daily a special

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Church died in this house at an advanced age in 1922.



Morning Service in the Lady Chapel, and the Cathedral Service of Evensong.

Mr. Pinder was well served by a succession of not undistinguished colleagues. Mr. Pedder, himself a student in 1840, returned to the College as Vice-Principal in 1842 and did good work for five years. He was succeeded by the Rev. C. E. Prichard, a Fellow of Balliol, who occupied the post for three years. Meanwhile, during 1846, much valuable teaching was given by a voluntary Lecturer, the Rev. J. Lonsdale, a son of the Bishop of Lichfield, and, like Mr. Prichard, a Fellow of Balliol. After Mr. Prichard came the Rev. E. Huxtable, a man of very considerable theological attainments, who occupied the position of Vice-Principal for thirteen years, to the great benefit of the College. His profound knowledge of the Greek text was sometimes provocative of a sportive spirit of adventure on the part of the less learned among the students. The writer of this History has before him an amusing letter from a student of that date which describes how on one occasion the student in question volunteered the statement that a certain unimportant word had no place in the correct text of the Greek Testament. Huxtable, without a moment's hesitation, declared that the word was included in every single uncial text, and proceeded to dwell upon the fact with so much warmth that (to use the student's words) " I feared he would lose his reason, so excited did he become over my innocent though possibly too ambitious remark ! "

In 1854 the Rev. C. M. Church joined the Staff. Of him we shall have more to say as our History proceeds, for it is not too much to say of him that—resident as he was in Wells until the end of his life—he gave all his sympathies to the College, and influenced the whole course of its history until his death in 1915.

## 8      **The History of Wells Theological College**

These able and devoted men were in succession Mr. Pinder's colleagues, and to them, as to Mr. Pinder himself, the College owes a deep debt of gratitude.

It is much to be regretted that already (1923) those early years in the history of the College are to a large extent buried in oblivion. But it is not difficult to imagine that they were years full of perplexities and problems which had to be faced and, if possible, to be solved without any help from past experience or precedents. During the first few years the number of students was not great. This was due partly to the novelty of the institution and partly to the suspicion with which in some quarters the systematic study of Theology was regarded. But later, large numbers of men flocked to Wells as being the most attractive, if not literally the only Theological College in existence. And not all of these were prepared to fall in readily with the gentle discipline of Mr. Pinder's rule. There was a notion, not uncommon in those days, that a year at such a College would render the most harum-scarum young graduate fit to receive Holy Orders, and possibly thereafter to succeed with some measure of decorum to a family living within two or three years of his Ordination. Such cases must have been difficult even for Mr. Pinder to handle, notwithstanding his unfailing tact and wisdom, and tradition has still some tales to tell, not without humour, of those early days. Some there were, for instance, who loved the company of the driver of the coach which then plied between Bath and Wells, who were even privileged sometimes to drive the said coach themselves, and who preferred such company and occupation to the attendance at Mr. Pinder's lectures. Others there were who, although admonished to live with great simplicity, delighted to show hospitality to their friends by large and expensive dinner-parties. Nor does tradition lie when it tells us of one gay



young man who won a wager from a fellow-student by swimming round the Palace moat at midnight. In fact it is easy to believe that, in those early days, the patience and the discretion of the Principal were sometimes subjected to very severe tests.

At first the students all resided in the Vicars' Close; but, when the numbers became large, the Close was unable to accommodate them all and the men were inevitably scattered to lodge in the Market Place or on the Cathedral Green. This custom, in fact, continued till within the last thirty years; and, though no scandalous result has been recorded, the practice must have made the exercise of discipline infinitely more difficult when as yet a high standard of decorum had not been firmly established. On the other hand, it may be pleaded by the men who knew the College in those days, as well as by those who, in later times, have been students of the College, that the character for independence of thought and action, which is not unjustly claimed for Wells men, is to be traced in no small degree to the way in which the honour of the College has always been largely left in the hands of the students.

Canon Pinder held his place as Principal till 1865, and to the last he retained the respect and affection of all with whom he came into contact. But, latterly, growing deafness made his work more difficult, and the early freedom of his intercourse with the students became almost impossible. Tradition speaks of the embarrassment experienced by men, possibly shy by nature and weak in voice, when called upon to read a lesson or even to preach a sermon to the Principal alone in his study. Sometimes, too, as often in such cases, his deafness led to rather trying situations. Thus it is related that on one occasion when Canon Pinder was in residence he found himself the only Priest when the time came to enter the Choir for Evensong. But, while

## 10      **The History of Wells Theological College**

Pinder was engaged with his own preliminary devotions, the unpunctual Priest Vicar, whose duty it was to take the Service, entered the church and hurriedly began reading the Exhortation. Then the Canon, having finished his prayers and not perceiving that he was no longer the only Priest present, began himself to say the Exhortation with his characteristic reverence and impressiveness. How long this discordant and unrehearsed duet lasted history does not relate, but we can understand that it was a trying moment for all, and not least for the students who were present.

In spite, however, of the growing infirmities of age, Canon Pinder carried on his work with the utmost zeal, and there was a general feeling of profound regret when, in 1865, the Principal announced his intention of resigning his post. This feeling took definite shape in the raising of a sum of £2500 in appreciation of his work; and this sum, contributed by former students of the College and a few others, was called the Pinder Memorial Fund, and was invested, a few years later, in the purchase of certain houses (four in all) in the Vicars' Close. The rent of these houses, amounting to about £120, forms the chief endowment of the College up to the present time. The Trustees of this Fund were the Earl of Cork, R. Neville-Grenville, Esq., M.P., F. Horner, Esq., the Rev. A. W. Grafton, and later the Rev. E. L. Elwes. In 1896 the property of the Pinder Memorial Fund was transferred to the Trustees of the College, and by them the responsibilities of the Pinder Trust are now carried on.

It should be added here as worthy of record that the respect in which Canon Pinder was held had already found expression in 1851, when two Scholarships were established in his name in his old College in Barbadoes. A sum of £1642 was raised for this purpose among the students of Wells, and to the

present day these Scholarships at Codrington College bear witness to the gratitude of Wells men for the blessings received under their first Principal. It is interesting to quote in this connection a letter written in 1914 by the Principal of Codrington College, himself a Wells man—A. H. Anstey, now Bishop of Trinidad : “ We are continually reminded of our connection with Wells. Numbers of the people on the estate are called Pinder, presumably because they were acquired whilst he was Principal, and either were given the name before the emancipation of the slaves or took it afterwards. There are also old papers in our day-book connected with the founding of Wells, and describing how its curriculum was to be conducted. But the most useful link with Wells is found in the two Pinder Scholarships which enable men who are willing to be ordained in the West Indies to receive a training for the Ministry out here. Generations of clergy have profited by these Scholarships. One of the scholars at present is the son of a Priest, whose mother was left so badly off that he had only received one term’s schooling in his life. I am pleased to say he has made great progress ; it is the Scholarship that has given him the chance.”

Canon Pinder left Wells in 1865 (to use the words of C. M. Church, who records his resignation) : “ After twenty-five years of faithful service to God and unceasing interest in the welfare of the College.” He went to reside at West Malvern, where he died in 1868. He had done excellent work at Wells as a Founder and as a pioneer. The foundations which he laid have never needed to be relaid, and the establishment of many<sup>1</sup> other Theological Colleges, even before his death, has testified to the success of what was at first a venture of faith.

<sup>1</sup> St. Aidan’s, 1846; Cuddesdon, 1854; Lichfield, 1857; Salisbury, 1860.



## CHAPTER II

### IN QUIETNESS AND CONFIDENCE

WITH the resignation of Canon Pinder the first chapter of the history of the College may naturally come to an end.

The days of experiment in untried fields were over, and instead there was the less exciting but no less laborious task of maintaining day by day the life and discipline of an Institution which had proved its usefulness and value. Meanwhile other Colleges of a more or less similar character had risen up as friendly rivals, and Wells had no longer the monopoly of suspicion and detraction on the one hand or of enthusiastic welcome on the other. Times had changed, and had brought not indeed freedom from anxieties but a change in their character.

To the writer of these pages the period upon which we are now entering represents the dawning of a new era, inasmuch as he is approaching a time when printed records of the College can be said to exist, and when his own personal knowledge of the College is able to help him in dealing with the available information.

Speaking generally, the history of the College is contained in the College Calendar; but in the early days no Calendar was printed. And when, later, the publication of the Calendar began, pecuniary reasons forbade its issue annually in a complete form. Up to the early 'seventies the body of the book was reprinted only once in two or three years, while each year a few pages of additions and corrections



CANON C. M. CHURCH  
PRINCIPAL OF WELLS 1866—1880





were bound up with the new edition. This furnished an inadequate record of the College, though it was the only kind of record which was financially possible. But in 1874 the annual publication of the Calendar became feasible by the institution of the Wells Missionary Association, of which more must be said a little later. Yet, even at the date of Canon Pinder's retirement, the materials for some consecutive record of the College are becoming less scanty, and the writer is somewhat less in the position of the Chosen People when they were called upon to make bricks without straw.

When Canon Pinder resigned his office, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, Lord Auckland, appointed the Rev. Henry Bannerman Burney to be Principal. Mr. Burney had recently returned from India with the reputation of being the best preacher among all the Chaplains upon the Indian Establishment. To this well-deserved fame the writer of this History, who was himself the colleague of Mr. Burney in his parish of Norton St. Philip, can add from personal knowledge the fact that Mr. Burney possessed the pastoral spirit in no ordinary measure and, in particular, an unusual faculty of winning the confidence of young people. The friends of the College were therefore fully justified in congratulating themselves upon Mr. Burney's appointment, and there seemed good reason for hoping that he would be able to carry on his work as Principal for a lengthened period. Mr. Burney, however, was a man of very high ideals, and he soon recognised the fact that his health was not equal to the demands which his work as Principal unceasingly made upon him. He realised also that to maintain the College at the high level to which Canon Pinder had brought it he had need of a wider experience of the methods of College management and discipline than his work in India had afforded him. Accordingly, after





other Colleges were established in various parts of England. Thus St. Aidan's was founded in 1846, Cuddesdon in 1854, Lichfield in 1857 and Salisbury in 1860, besides two others which were established later, in 1876, at Leeds and at Ely. It was, indeed, a friendly rivalry in which all these Colleges were engaged. But it must be obvious that the applicants for admission to any one College could not be so numerous as when there were only two or three such institutions in the whole kingdom. Consequently the years through which Mr. Church was called upon to pilot the College at Wells were years of very great difficulty and financial strain such as might well have led a less courageous man to advise the Trustees that it was hopeless to carry on the College in the face of so much discouragement.

It is worth while to pause a moment to describe this man who carried the College on through these anxious and critical years. Charles Marcus Church was the only brother of the more widely known R. W. Church, Dean of St. Paul's. He was born in Florence, and some of his early years were spent in Italy. He graduated at Oriel College, Oxford, with a Second Class in Literis Humanioribus. Later he gained an intimate knowledge of the politics of Greece, for his uncle, Sir Richard Church, was the leader of the National Party which was instrumental in gaining for that country a constitutional regime. Consequently the new Principal of Wells possessed a breadth of culture which is not very common among the English clergy. He was well acquainted with the politics of Europe and intimately familiar with Italian Art. Combined with all this he was a man of singular refinement and of a natural humility which was always eager to give full credit to his pupils for industry and erudition. But, together with the diffidence which this humility produced, there was a force of courage and a firmness which many a more

## 16      **The History of Wells Theological College**

self-assertive character might be found to lack. It was possible to misunderstand and to take advantage of a man whose gentleness and courtesy were un-failing, and some no doubt did misunderstand him. But the great majority of the students of this period realised and appreciated the rare culture of the Principal and regarded him with profound respect. Nor could anyone remain long a student of the College without discovering that the Principal was in genuine sympathy with him and keenly anxious to do all in his power to help him. Probably, however, it was not as a lecturer that Mr. Church excelled, but rather as an adviser, always ready and capable to discuss privately out of a full mind the perplexities which often present themselves to the students of theology. Certain it is that Canon Church retained to the end of his long life and residence in Wells the sincere regard and the cordial affection of many generations of Wells men.

Mr. Church's colleague as Vice-Principal during the greater part of his tenure of the office of Principal (1861-1875) was the Rev. Augustus William Grafton. Mr. Grafton had been a Scholar of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and obtained a First Class in the Theological Tripos, afterwards acting as Secretary to Dean Alford when he was at work upon his Commentary on the New Testament. Mr. Grafton was an enthusiastic student full of fresh ideas, while at the same time he was very firm in his hold on the doctrines of the Church. Those who had the advantage of attending his lectures are not likely to forget the fervent emphasis with which he insisted on the realities of religion.

On the lighter side of things it was sometimes surmised jokingly by the students that Mr. Grafton's study of many subjects had not included the virtue of punctuality: his friends would sometimes smile to see him hurrying across the Cathedral Green some



minutes after the clock had struck the hour of the lecture, his arms laden with books which he was continually dropping as he hurried along. His lectures were often prefaced by the beautiful and well-known Prayer for Unity: and, as it was characteristic of his treatment of the Epistles to break up the chapters into many sections, his lectures were sometimes playfully termed "our unhappy divisions." His was indeed a charming personality, so learned, devout and childlike in its simplicity.

When, in 1870, Mr. Grafton became Vicar of Henton near Wells (carrying on at the same time his work in connection with the College), an eminent resident in Wells—Lord Sydney Godolphin Osborne, so well known to readers of the *Times* of that day as "S. G. O."—well expressed the general opinion of Mr. Grafton's pastoral enthusiasm: "It is delightful to see the devil combated with such simple directness."

Three incidents belonging to the period when Messrs. Church and Grafton were sharing the responsibilities of the College are worthy of record because they have each had a great and lasting influence for good—the first the institution of the Wells Missionary Association; the second the restoration of the Chapel in the Vicars' Close; the third the Triennial Gatherings of old students at Wells, which must form the subject of a special chapter.

The Wells Missionary Association took its beginning at a meeting held in the chamber over the gateway of the Vicars' Close, which was then used as the College Library, on May 12, 1874. The students at that time had been deeply stirred by the action of A. N. West (student 1872) in answering the call to the Mission Field which came to him through the observance of the first Day of Intercession for

## 18      **The History of Wells Theological College**

Missions on St. Andrew's Day, 1872. During 1873 he had been at work, almost single-handed, at Zanzibar, where he was instrumental in purchasing, chiefly at his own cost, the site of the Slave Market where now the Cathedral Church stands. Mr. West returned to England for a short furlough at the end of 1873, and he visited Wells in May 1874 with a view to enlisting some recruits for the Mission to Central Africa. There are perhaps some still living who will remember that meeting in the Library, and the remarkable atmosphere of spirituality with which it was charged. In addition to Mr. West, whose keenness and enthusiasm were unbounded and his zeal contagious, there was also another present, as yet a student unordained, whose life has been spent ever since, almost without a break, in the service of the Church in South Africa—W. A. Holbech, now Bishop of St. Helena. The scheme propounded to that meeting was brought forward by a former student who had not long been in Priest's Orders—E. L. Elwes, now Chancellor of Chichester Cathedral, and the writer of these pages. The scheme was an ambitious one—too ambitious, in fact, to be carried out at that time. It was that a Brotherhood should be formed among the students of Wells to work on community lines in some Missionary Diocese, and that the Brotherhood should be manned and supported by the members of the College. The scheme was, in fact, very similar to what is now well known as the Bush-Brotherhood System, but with the special feature that it should be a Brotherhood of Wells men working if possible in the Diocese of a Wells Bishop. The Principal received the scheme with characteristic sympathy, but it was a new idea, the invention of a young enthusiast, which needed to be checked and examined by others more experienced than he. Ultimately the plan of a Brotherhood was given up

as being at the time impracticable, and, in its place, there was instituted what has been known ever since as the Wells Missionary Association. To quote the first Rule—"The Association is formed to be a bond of union between past and present students on the basis of Prayer and Almsgiving." Briefly, it is a Guild which aims at assisting the Wells men who are at work abroad by the contributions of the Wells men in England, and at directing the intercessions of Wells men at home by keeping them in touch with the brethren in the Mission Field. This is carried out, as far as may be, by the common use of a daily Prayer and the circulation of an annual Report embodying the letters of the students who are at work in foreign lands.

In this form the Association may claim to have done good work and to have been much valued by the Wells men, Bishops and Priests, who are at work abroad. Nor can we doubt that the large number of Wells men, who in recent years have volunteered for the service of the Church in foreign parts, have been sent forth as "labourers into the harvest" in answer to the prayers of the Association. And, over and above the valuable work which the Association has done directly by its prayers and alms, there is the fact that it has no doubt created and maintained among the past and present members of the College that strong sense of unity, comradeship and esprit de corps which forms so large a part of the birthright of a Wells man. Moreover, besides this, and closely connected with it, there has been the additional benefit to the whole College, to which attention has been already called, viz. that the annual publication of the Report of the Association has made it possible, until the Great War, to print the College Calendar annually instead of at irregular and possibly distant intervals.

To return to the other matter belonging to this



period which has been mentioned as of great importance—the restoration of the Chapel in the Vicars' Close. This Chapel was originally consecrated on June 29, 1497, by Bishop Thomas Cornish, the Suffragan of Bishop Oliver King, the builder of Bath Abbey. Bishop Cornish's tomb stands at the foot of the staircase which leads from the North Transept of Wells Cathedral to the Chapter House. The Chapel was built for the use of the Vicars Choral and belongs to them. They are bound by their Statutes to meet in it for service once a year. In this Chapel the Inaugural Service of the Theological College was held on August 3, 1840.

In 1875 the Chapel had become sadly dilapidated : the stone-work was falling to pieces and the East Window was bricked up, though still retaining (as was discovered later) some few relics of the old glass.

An old student of the College (E. L. Elwes), who had recently become a member of the Staff, was moved to pity by the condition of the Chapel, and he obtained permission from the authorities of the College to set in motion a scheme for its restoration. Accordingly, by the generosity of many friends, during the winter 1875–1876 the Chapel was substantially repaired and beautified at a cost of upwards of £1000, while the chamber over the Chapel was also restored, supplied with a new fireplace and chimney, and made available as a vestry or a lecture-room. On the Feast of the Purification, 1876, the Chapel was re-dedicated by a Celebration of the Holy Communion at eight with a sermon by the Bishop of Bath and Wells (Lord A. C. Hervey). The Bishop was received in the Library over the gateway of the Close by the College Staff—Messrs. Church, Gibson and Elwes—and a procession was formed led by the present students and by the Rev. G. Ommaney, Vicar of Draycot, who had been

himself a student of the College in 1843. These, with Mrs. Church, Mrs. Fagan and Mr. A. A. Clarke, formed the tiny congregation to whom the Bishop gave of his best.

“It will be a blessed fruit (he said in his sermon) of this Oratory and its quiet seclusion, if, in your young days, before the hurry and crowded work of this busy age has made you restless, you can acquire the habit of rapt prayer and of patient thought.”

Many, we may confidently hope, have formed this habit in the devotional use of the Chapel in the forty-seven years which have since elapsed.

The Chapel is held by the Theological College at a nominal rent for fifty years (since 1876) from the College of the Vicars Choral.

The East Window of the Chapel is filled with stained glass in memory of Canon Pinder. The subject is the Lord's Commission to His Apostles, and the small figures of angels looking down are ancient glass which was found in the window when the brick and plaster which blocked it were removed. Another window is in memory of A. N. West. The other windows were the gift of an anonymous donor, of the Rev. P. George and (the small one over the door) of the Rev. C. Smythe, both old students of the College. The Communion Plate was the gift of the students in residence in 1876. The glass both in the Chapel and in the chamber above is the work of Messrs. Clayton and Bell, who carefully worked in all the old glass that was available; the Plate was supplied by Singer of Frome.

In later years other benefactors have added to the adequate furnishing of the Chapel: the walls have been covered with sgraffito work and the panels of the wainscoting on the north wall have been filled with figures in gesso. These two last additions to the decoration were carried out in the time of



## 22      **The History of Wells Theological College**

Principal Gibson under the direction of Mr. Heywood Sumner.

The small accommodation provided by the Close Chapel has not made it possible for all the College services to be held in it. In the earliest days of the College (as has been said) the College service of Matins was said in the Lady Chapel, and later in the Choir of the Cathedral. For these services a small organ was purchased by the subscriptions of past and present students. This organ was, later, removed to the Bishop's Chapel and, when the services of the College were once more taken in the Lady Chapel, the organ was placed there, and there it now stands. On the death of Bishop Law the College was permitted to use the Palace Chapel for Matins at eight, and this custom was continued till the latter days of Principal Gibson, when (1895), by common consent, a move was made once more to the Lady Chapel, where the Morning Services are performed at the present time (1923). The necessary fittings of the Lady Chapel were supplied by the subscriptions of former students. But, from the date of its restoration, the Chapel in the Close has been used for the services of Sext and Compline and for Celebrations of the Holy Communion on Holy Days, as well as for occasional services of Evensong with sermons by the Staff or by invited preachers. But, apart from the actual services which are held in the Close Chapel, its restoration has had a marked influence upon the life of the College, an influence which those only can rightly estimate who were familiar with the Vicars' Close in days previous to the restoration. Nothing could have been more depressing to the religious tone of the place than to see at the top of the Close, which was the home of the College, a building dedicated indeed to God but showing every possible evidence of indifference and neglect. On the other hand, in its present condition

of restored beauty, the Chapel is a *Sursum Corda*; its door is never locked, its bell is often heard summoning to prayer, and its whole appearance tells of sanctity and devotion. Undoubtedly it is to this little House of God that many generations of men look back as to the spring of their spiritual life.

Yet, before we pass on to other topics, the writer of these lines cannot resist the wish to recall some of the associations of those other College services which were held in the Palace Chapel, and which to a large number of old students still living, as to himself, will ever be a holy and happy memory. It was a pleasant walk each morning from the Close to the Palace through "Pennyless Porch" and "the Bishop's Eye," though some thought the way rather long upon the wet mornings with which Wells is so abundantly blessed. The return was generally enjoyed in a more leisurely fashion, and friendships deepened and ripened as we walked and talked.

In connection with those services, honourable mention should be made of Cardwell, the veteran bell-ringer and organ-blower, whose quaint features would be seen looking out of the turret window as he rang the bell. It was said of him that he had never missed a service at which he was on duty for upwards of seventy years, and his death within a few weeks of his hundredth birthday was felt by many as the loss of a good servant and friend of the College.

Those Chapel services owed very much in respect of their reverence to the care which was taken with the simple music by Charles William Lavington, the Cathedral organist. He was a man to whom all students of those days owe a debt of gratitude which is hard to estimate. It was not only that week by week he gave useful elementary lessons in theory and intoning as well as routine practice for the Chapel music. What was of even more value



## 24      The History of Wells Theological College

was the example which he invariably set of devout reverence in all things connected with the services of the Church. It was said of him that, even after many years of experience, he never omitted to play over his accompaniment to the Psalms before the Cathedral services. It was impossible to spend an hour in his presence without feeling that here indeed was a "holy and humble man of heart."<sup>1</sup>

We have spoken of the buildings in which the devotional life of the College was carried on. Something should also be said about the surroundings which men of those days will associate with the lectures which formed so valuable a part of their training. Up to 1891 all the ordinary instruction was carried on in the long and narrow chamber (now used as a Museum) over the western cloister. This was kindly lent to the College by the Dean and Chapter. It was not altogether a convenient room by reason of its shape: but the loan of it was one of the many evidences of goodwill which have marked the relations of the Cathedral to the College from the first. In 1891 (as will be related in the next chapter), when "the Archdeacon's House" became the College Library, other and more convenient lecture-rooms were made available.

There was a time in the reign of Principal Church (1872) when it seemed as if the flow of graduates was abating. The authorities therefore decided that it would be wise to admit a limited number of non-graduates to the College. About the same time the College came into possession, through the Pinder Trust, of the large double house in the Close (No. 16) which had long been occupied as a private

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lavington died in 1895 after a long period of incapacitating suffering and weakness. During those last months his place in the College practice and services was taken ably and sympathetically by Mr. H. Moody, who is now organist of Ripon Cathedral.

residence. The plan was conceived and carried out by Mr. Church of placing four non-graduate students in No. 16 with the Chaplain, the junior member of the Staff (Mr. Gibson and later Mr. Elwes), to live with them and preside at the meals. It was a very pleasant and happy, not to say merry, life which was lived for some years in that house with Mrs. Porter as landlady and housekeeper. There was little difference in age between the Chaplain and the students, and the terms on which they lived together were essentially fraternal. Fortunately, however, the stream of graduates to Wells soon began again to flow when Mr. Gibson returned from Leeds in 1880 to take his place as Principal of the College. And so the cheery brotherhood at "University House," as the tradesmen used incorrectly to call it (for as a matter of fact it was the only lodging-house in which University men did *not* reside!), came to an end and the rooms in No. 16—with Mrs. Wall for landlady—became separate apartments like the others in the Vicars' Close.

The tone and spirit of Wells Theological College is due to some extent to the way in which the fascination of the place and the attraction of the system have caught hold of the officers who have worked here. Consequently the record of the reign of Mr. Church as Principal would not be complete without some brief notice of those who worked with him during that time.

Of Mr. Grafton we have already spoken. He resigned his office when he became Vicar of High-bridge in 1875. His successor was the Rev. E. C. S. Gibson (afterwards Bishop of Gloucester), whose name since that date has been closely bound up with all that concerns the College. Having been a student of the College, Mr. Gibson was ordained directly to the Chaplaincy at Christmas 1871, and he retained



that office till Mr. Grafton left. Only a year later (1867) Mr. Gibson was called away to the anxious and difficult post of first Principal of Leeds Clergy School, from whence he returned to Wells as Principal in 1880 in succession to Mr. Church, who then became Canon Residentiary of Wells Cathedral.

When Mr. Gibson became Vice-Principal (1875) the Rev. Edward Leighton Elwes was made Chaplain. He had been a student of the College 1871-2, and had then served a curacy in Sussex, and another with Mr. Burney at Norton St. Philip. In 1879 he accepted the living of Over Stowey near Bridgewater, and later became Rector of Woolbeding in Sussex, where, in succession, he filled the offices of Archdeacon of Chichester and Chancellor of the Cathedral Church.

When Mr. Gibson left Wells for Leeds in 1876, Mr. Elwes became Vice-Principal, and the Chaplaincy was filled by the Rev. Thomas Scott Holmes, who came from a somewhat similar position at St. Aidan's. He had been a scholar of Sidney Sussex, Cambridge, and graduated as 6th Senior Optime. He succeeded Mr. Elwes as Vice-Principal in 1879, but left the College in 1880 to become Vicar of Wookey, from whence he returned to Wells in 1900 as Canon Residentiary. He was a man of great industry and accuracy of thought, and gained considerable fame in later years by the publication of *The History of the Church in Gaul in the First Six Centuries*, which obtained for him the degree of D.D. at Cambridge in 1911. His death in 1918 was accelerated by the privations which he underwent in travelling from Germany at the beginning of the Great War, when, as Summer Chaplain at Frankfort, he was called upon to escort a large party of ladies and children to England in the face of great difficulties.

It may be well, before concluding this chapter,



to record an incident which is not very directly connected with the College, but which has never been told elsewhere and which should not be forgotten.

It has been already stated that there have been "intervals" when the Principal of the College has not resided in the house at the East End of the Cathedral. One of those intervals was between 1876 and 1880, when Mr. Church occupied the house which is now the Cathedral Choir School, and which stands between the Deanery and the ancient "Archdeacon's House," which is now the College Library.

The story of how that house passed into the hands of the Chapter is not without some interest. It was in the summer of 1876, when the College was keeping holiday. The Vice-Principal happened to return to Wells for a few days, and called on Mrs. Church, who told him that the house in question was as good as sold to some Romanists who were looking for a site for a Community House and church. If any readers of these words knew Mrs. Church they can picture to themselves the persuasive way in which she said to Mr. Elwes, "Why don't you go and buy it?" Now it need not imply any unreasonable Protestant bias on his part if Mr. Elwes doubted the suitability of such a site for a Roman Establishment. So the Vice-Principal made inquiry without any delay, and found that the Roman inquirer about the house was haggling over the last £100. Thus he was just in time to make the purchase himself. The owner was delighted to obtain without further negotiation the full sum he asked; and, when the Romanists returned a few hours later prepared to come to terms, they found that the house had slipped through their fingers.

Thus the Dean and Chapter may well thank Mrs. Church for preserving them from a somewhat

## **28      The History of Wells Theological College**

incongruous neighbour, and the house, instead of affording a site for the "Roman Mission," became at first the residence of the Principal of the College for four years, and in 1889 was purchased by the Trustees of the College, from whom it has since been rented by the Dean and Chapter to serve as the Cathedral School.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TRIENNIAL FESTIVALS

IN a former chapter we said that there were three notable institutions set on foot during Canon Church's tenure of office to the lasting benefit of the College: these were the restoration of the Chapel in the Close, the establishment of the Wells Missionary Association, and the inauguration of the Triennial Meetings of Old Students. Of these we have already spoken of the two first. But the subject and record of the "Triennials" deserves a chapter to itself.

Canon Pinder had never been in favour of such gatherings. Perhaps his deafness made him feel diffident of his power to guide such an assembly effectively, or possibly, in harmony with the temper of his generation, he doubted the wisdom of appealing—as such gatherings must powerfully appeal—to the emotions of those who attended them. At any rate, for whatever reason, Canon Pinder was opposed to such meetings, and therefore none such were held while he was Principal.

Mr. Church, however, held a different opinion, although his loyalty to his chief made him quiescent in the matter so long as Canon Pinder was at Wells. But, when Mr. Church found himself in the responsible position which Mr. Burney had vacated, he lost no time in laying his plans for a meeting of the Old Students. And among the former students of the College there was one whose eminence and



originality of mind indicated him as a man well suited to address his brother students on such an occasion. This was the Hon. the Rev. W. H. Lyttelton, the brother of the well-known and honoured Lord Lyttelton, and Rector of Hagley. Mr. Lyttelton had himself been a student of the College in 1842, when the College had not long begun its work, and he had maintained his interest in the College and his friendship with Canon Pinder and Mr. Church. Accordingly, in April 1869 the first meeting of Old Students was held, and held so successfully that there could be no hesitation about making the gathering an institution of regular occurrence. No less than one hundred and ten students past and present are recorded to have attended that first meeting.

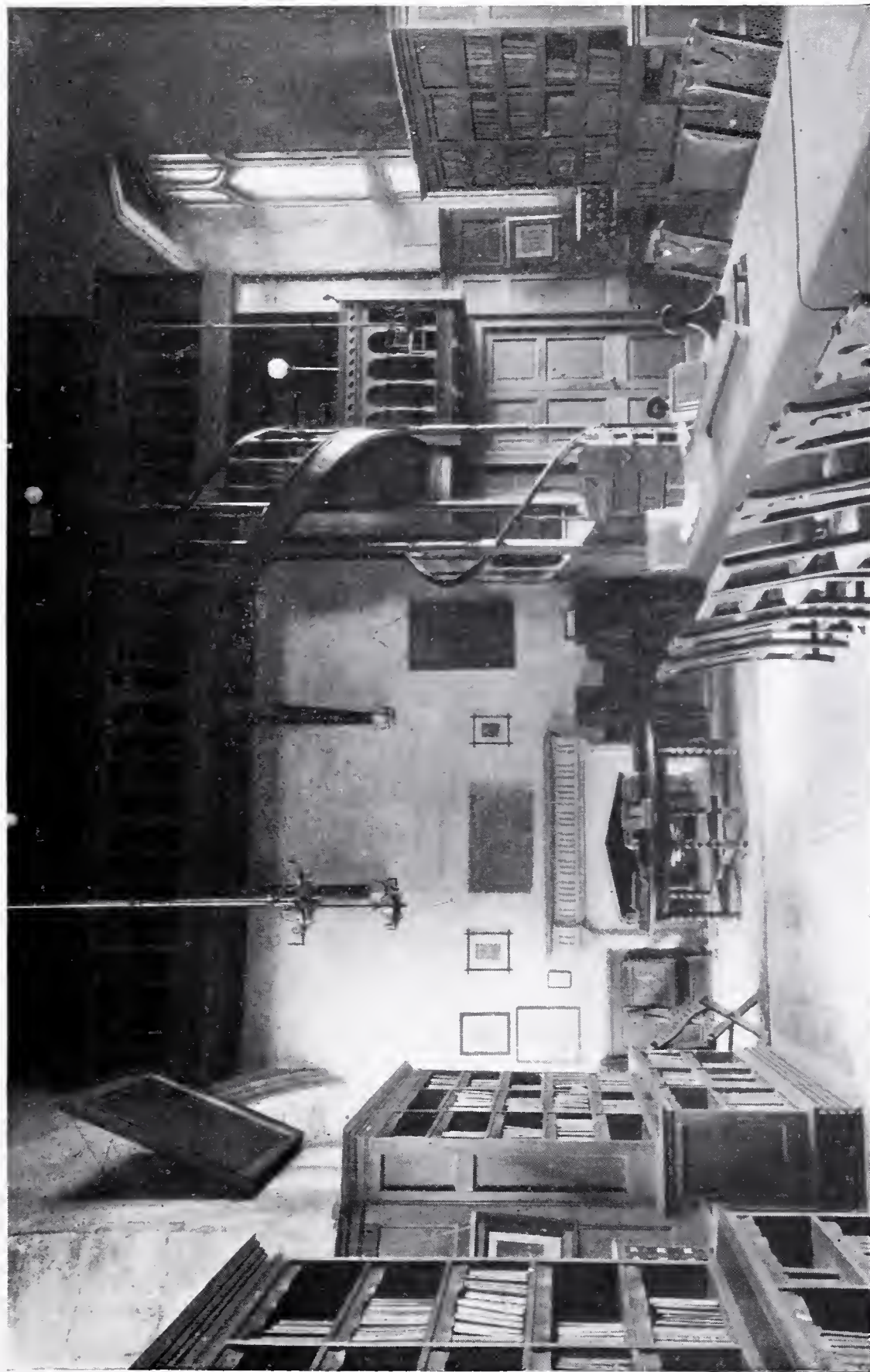
It may be worth while to give the programme of that Festival by way of comparison with the timetable of the more recent gatherings.

The day began with Matins in the Cathedral at nine, and this was followed by a service of the Holy Communion at eleven with a sermon by Mr. Lyttelton. Evensong at three closed the devotional arrangements. After this there followed at four o'clock, an hour which seems strange to us to-day, a public dinner in the Town Hall with a succession of speeches. The Chairman at the dinner was Bishop Chapman, who was at the time in charge of the Diocese during the vacancy of the See.

Since that date these Festivals have been held triennially, except that none was held in 1917, an omission which was unavoidable in consequence of the Great War.

There can be no question as to the stimulating influence of such meetings. Wells in itself is an inspiring place with its unique group of buildings and its tranquil precincts, and anyone who has spent there a year or more in preparation for his





*Photograph by Darakes & Partridge, Wells*

INTERIOR OF COLLEGE LIBRARY



Ministry may well be inclined to say, "All my fresh springs shall be in thee." So delightful, in fact, are the Triennial Meetings to those who attend them, that it has been proposed from time to time that the Festival should be held annually, as at some of the other Theological Colleges. Experience, however, has led a majority of those who are interested in the matter to give their preference to the existing plan. It is claimed that few are able to come to Wells for such a purpose every year, and it well might chance that men and their contemporaries would choose different years for their attendance at the Festival. On the other hand, when the invitations go out only once in three years, everyone who can possibly manage it will make an effort to be present. Moreover, there are some who say that Wells is not very easy of access, and certain it is that the railway fare may prove to some a formidable consideration. For such reasons the authorities have come to the conclusion that the custom of summoning the students triennially, and not more frequently, is the plan which is best adapted to the circumstances of our College.

In the College Calendar under the date of the year following the meeting there may be found a record of the Festivals, giving in each case the name of the preacher and the text upon which he preached. These brief notices are no doubt powerful to recall to the memory of those who were present many happy recollections of the details of each Festival as it occurred. But it may be of interest to add a few words to show that every Festival has had more or less a character of its own.

Of the sermons delivered on these occasions, most have been published, and generally a summary at least of the sermon is to be found in the Calendar for the succeeding year. The sermons form a remarkable series of meditations upon the work of a



## 32      **The History of Wells Theological College**

Theological College and of the character which it should produce. It may be invidious to draw attention to individual sermons where all have been so excellent, but the writer of these lines—who has been present at every Festival except the first—cannot help recalling with special pleasure certain of the sermons which have been delivered on these occasions. Thus, for instance, in 1872 it was a very impressive thought of Bishop Moberly that St. Peter and St. John represented the two characteristics of all who should follow Christ—Alertness and Devotion.

Nor could anyone who heard him ever forget the sermon of Archbishop Benson (then of Truro) in 1878, in which he expatiated on “the length and breadth and depth and height.”

In 1884 Bishop Lightfoot of Durham preached in a very memorable way on the words, “He hath not dealt so with any nation” (Psalm cxlvii. 20), a sermon full of profound encouragement and thankfulness.

Archbishop Alexander (then Bishop of Derry) addressed us in 1890 with characteristic poetry and epigram about “St. Paul, who has been called the Torquemada of the Pharisees, but who in the Epistles soothes and sighs and weeps.”

In 1905 Bishop Winnington Ingram of London charmed us all with the happy optimism of his treatment of the Gospel metaphor of the Water; and we recall how, when he concluded his impressive sermon with the quotation, “there is a sound of abundance of rain,” his words were almost drowned by the pelting of a storm against the windows of the Cathedral.

It might almost be said that every Triennial Festival has had its own special character, a character which it received either from the remarkable brilliancy of the weather, or from the presence of



some particularly distinguished guest, or from the inauguration of some new custom,<sup>1</sup> or of some fresh addition to the amenities of the College. Of these a few words may be said later.

But the Festival of 1890 deserves some special mention. This was the Jubilee year, the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the College. The Principal at the time was Mr. Gibson, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, and the College was full to its utmost capacity.

The Principal was determined to mark the Jubilee of the College by some outstanding event, and, just at that time, an opportunity presented itself of purchasing for the use of the College the house which had been originally known as the house of the Archdeacon of Wells. This handsome building, situated just opposite the north porch of the Cathedral, is described by Parker as "a house of at least equal importance with the Deanery, in fact the hall of it is larger and more imposing, and in this instance it occupies the whole height of the building from the ground to the roof. The house was originally built in the time of Edward I, as is shown by the windows in the gable at the east end." This house was the residence (in the reign of Henry VIII) of Polydore Virgil, the Archdeacon of Wells, who is said to have written his history in the "solar" which is now one of the College lecture-rooms. In recent years the house had passed into lay hands, and had been modernised by the division of the hall into two storeys and by the insertion of sash windows in the front.

In a happy moment the idea occurred to the Principal that the College Jubilee might be fitly marked by the purchase of the "Archdeacon's House" and its adaptation for the use of the

<sup>1</sup> The festal Evensong on the eve of the Festival was first introduced in 1884.

## 34      **The History of Wells Theological College**

College as a Library<sup>1</sup> and Lecture Rooms. Since 1860 the books of the College had been housed in the room over the gateway of the Vicars' Close. This is a very beautiful and interesting chamber from an archæological point of view, but it is excessively cold and draughty, and in 1890 it was already becoming too small for the purpose of the College Library. Accordingly, Mr. Gibson lost no time in calling in the advice of the eminent architect, Mr. Edmund Buckle, and in his hands the Archdeacon's House became once more one of the most dignified of that matchless group of buildings for which Wells is famed, and at the same time the College acquired a Library of adequate dimensions and of singular beauty.

The Archdeacon's House also provided two lecture-rooms as well as apartments for a caretaker. In addition to this, the original scheme included the erection of a house for the Principal in the kitchen-garden at the back abutting on the North Liberty, but that part of the plan was found to be undesirable. At the same time the lower part of the garden was utilised for the building of two five-courts and for the provision of two courts for lawn-tennis.

The restoration was carried out with the help of many friends at a cost of about £10,000.

The dedication of this invaluable addition to the amenities of the College formed the special feature of the Triennial Festival in 1890.

On May 22, the day following the actual Festival,

<sup>1</sup> The collection of books first began to be formed in 1841. Chancellor Law assigned for use as the College Library a room in the building in the High Street which was occupied as the Depository of the S.P.C.K. There the books of the College remained until the summer of 1860, when, under the superintendence of the Rev. C. M. Church, they were removed to the Vicars' Hall over the entrance to the Vicars' Close.



after Matins in the Cathedral, a short and impressive service was conducted by the Bishop (Lord A. C. Hervey) and the Principal in the Library itself, which was filled to its utmost capacity with a sympathetic congregation. After the service a meeting was held, over which the Bishop presided. The Bishop himself, the Principal, the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset (the Earl of Cork), the Dean of Wells (Dr. Plumptre) and others made speeches of hearty congratulation.

Nor is it unworthy of record that at this Jubilee Festival the announcement was made of the appointment of the first Wells man to become the Bishop of an English Diocese. This was J. W. Festing (student 1860), whose appointment as Bishop of St. Albans was appropriately announced on this day. Naturally he received a great ovation from his brother students, and his speech in acknowledgment was worthy of the occasion. Among other things he said, addressing the students: "Do not be too eager to employ much of this time in what is called practical parochial work. Work will come to you in plenty presently, but opportunities for study and reflection under the guidance of those who can direct your study and reflection to the best result will never come again. Use them now to the utmost and you will find yourselves better prepared for whatever may be in store for you hereafter." Thus the Triennial of 1890, the Jubilee Festival, was an occasion of no ordinary interest.

And the mention of the appointment of our first English Diocesan Bishop reminds us that, during those fifty years of its history, the College had been sending out men who had gained experience and eminence in many directions. In the Foreign Mission Field, for instance, many Wells men had arrived at positions of distinction, such as Bishop

Venables of Nassau (student 1850), Bishop Ll. Jones of Newfoundland (student 1863), and Bishop Willis of Honolulu (student 1858); while in England there were alumni of the College occupying important offices and doing work which might be full of interest and instruction to their brother students. Consequently the happy thought occurred to someone that it would be a welcome addition to the attractions of the Triennial Gatherings if the occasion was seized to invite certain of the old students, who were engaged in some work of a special kind at home or abroad, to tell the story of their experiences and to take the lead in a Conference upon the subject.<sup>1</sup>

Thus in 1893 the custom was begun of holding a meeting of this sort in the Library on the morning after the formal Triennial gathering. It happened at that time that several of the School Missions were presided over by Wells men, and the fact suggested itself that this should be the subject of the first Conference, with Messrs Donaldson (of the Eton Mission, now Bishop of Salisbury), Steele (of the Wellington Mission) and Vyvyan (of the Charterhouse Mission, now Bishop of Zululand) to lead the discussion. This innovation was the distinguishing mark of that year's Festival.

In 1896, for the first time, the Public Luncheon was served in the famous "Bishop's Barn." This gathering was also marked by the fact that it was

<sup>1</sup> The origin of the scheme may be traced to the interest which was kindled at the Triennial gathering of 1884 by a meeting held in the Wells Town Hall on the morning after the Festival at which Bishop Lightfoot of Durham, who had been the Special Preacher on the previous day, spoke upon the subject of the White Cross League with an authority all his own. That, indeed, was a Public Meeting open to all; but, addressed by such a man, the meeting made a great impression at the time, and its success suggested at a later date the Conferences of which we are now speaking.



the first at which Mr. Currie presided as Principal. And occasion was taken by the old pupils and friends of Mr. Gibson, who was leaving to become the Vicar of Leeds, to present him with an affectionate token (£253) of their friendship and regard. The Conference on the following morning was on the subject of Mission Work in South Africa, and telling addresses were given by Bishop Knight Bruce of Mashonaland and Canon Godfrey Callaway of St. John's, Kaffraria.

The Festival of 1899 was the first at which the number in attendance was larger than the Choir of the Cathedral could accommodate for the Early Celebration: a temporary altar was placed in the Nave at the entrance of the Choir. From that date all the Festival services have been held in the Nave.

In the year of which we are speaking (1899) there were present no less than three Wells Bishops who had formerly been students of the College, viz. Bishop Festing of St. Albans with his Suffragan of Colchester, Bishop Frank Johnson, and Bishop Gott of Truro. It was a very joyous meeting of about 240 friends, but it had in it a note of sadness in the mention made of the death since last Triennial of Bishop Knight Bruce, who had been the chief speaker at the Conference in 1896, of Mr. Huxtable, who was a Vice-Principal under Canon Pinder, and of Athelstan Coode, who was a Vice-Principal under Mr. Gibson, and whose life both at Wells and afterwards at Cardynham had been so full of promise.

The Conference this year was upon "Children's Services," and it had the advantage of having as the leader of the discussion Mr. Spencer Jones, who had much to do with the introduction of the "Method of St. Sulpice" into England, and whose humorous and incisive treatment of his subject on this occasion made a deep impression.

The next Triennial (1902) had as its novelty the

substitution of Gregorians for the accustomed Anglican chants at the Festival services, a change which was accepted by some with very mixed feelings.

The Conference was upon the subject of "Mission Work Abroad," and was made notable by a description of the Siege of Kimberley by Archdeacon Holbech (now Bishop of St. Helena), who was at the time Vicar of that town. Other speakers were Mr. Hutchinson, who had worked in Brisbane, and Mr. Tudor, whose varied experiences included life in Canada, in Kaffraria and as Chaplain in the South African War.

The Triennial of 1905 attracted a record number of former students. No less than 285 were present and it was necessary to erect a tent outside the "Bishop's Barn" to form an annexe for the accommodation of the luncheon party. The reason of this great concourse was not far to seek. It was the first Festival at which "Principal Gibson" appeared as Lord Bishop of Gloucester, and the opportunity was taken to present him with an episcopal ring "in token (as Canon Church said) of the perpetual union betwixt the Bishop and his old College." At the same tea-party in the Library (for it was a hopelessly wet day) a cheque for £100 was given to Canon Church "from 130 friends and colleagues" in commemoration of his connection with the College and the Cathedral for fifty years.

This Triennial, on the other hand, had its element of sadness, for Principal Currie had died in 1903 and he was greatly missed by many, although in the new Principal (the Rev. H. L. Goudge) they recognised an old friend.

The Conference on the following morning was on the subject of "Preaching." It was opened by the Archdeacon of Chichester (the Ven. E. L. Elwes), and was carried on by Mr Hollis and many others,



for it was a matter of which all present had had some experience.

In 1908 the special feature of the gathering was that, for the first time, an *Arch*bishop who was also an old student of the College was the preacher—the Archbishop of Brisbane. Naturally the subject of Foreign Missions took a prominent place in the thoughts of those who were present. The Principal dwelt upon it in his speech at the luncheon, and on the following morning the Archbishop himself took the lead in introducing the Missionary Work of the Church to the meeting in the College Library. Another novelty which marked this Triennial was a Cricket Match between the past and present students in which the latter were the winners by two runs.

The speciality of the gathering in 1911 was the number of changes which had to be recorded. Not only was there a new Dean of Wells, Dr. Jex Blake having retired and Dr. Armitage Robinson having taken his place, but also in the College itself Principal Goudge had left to become Principal of Ely Theological College and Canon of the Cathedral, and his seat at Wells was occupied by the Rev. R. G. Parsons: at the same time the Vice-Principal, Mr. Chastel de Boinville, had become Vicar of Martock, and the Rev. R. H. Lightfoot was his successor. But a special character of another kind was given to this Triennial by the fact that the preacher was the Bishop of Gloucester, whose personality has been identified with the life of Wells since 1871.

The Conference on the day after the Gathering was upon “The Religious Teaching of Children,” and the chief speakers were Mr. Chastel de Boinville and Mr. H. P. Statham, the Assistant Diocesan Inspector of Schools in the Diocese of Southwark.

In 1914 the Triennial was held in happy unconsciousness of the Great War which was to break out in a few months, and by which our College, like every

other agency for good in the country, was to be involved in difficulties. The services at the Festival were arranged on a new plan. The Holy Communion was celebrated in the Nave of the Cathedral at 7.30, but Matins was said plain in the Chapel of the Bishop's Palace, a service which must have recalled to many the daily Matins in that Chapel in the days of Lord A. C. Hervey. The Special Festival Service was held in the Cathedral Nave, when Bishop Talbot of Winchester preached the sermon. The Conference of the following morning was upon "The Church and the Disaffected," when addresses were given by the Rev. G. A. Hollis and by two speakers from outside the College, Messrs. Albert Mansbridge and H. J. Torr.

During the War it was impossible, for many reasons, to hold a Festival, and consequently none was held in 1917. But in 1920 the series of meetings was resumed, under Canon Hollis, who had lately returned from Leeds to become Principal of the College as well as Canon Residentiary and Chancellor of the Cathedral. The number of former students who attended this gathering was naturally smaller than in former years, partly because of the increased cost of travelling, and partly because during the War the number of students in the College had been small, and it is always the men of recent years who muster most strongly at these Reunions. But those who came were as enthusiastic as in any former year. And they found much to interest them. For the College, since the last gathering, had partially moved into the spacious house at the top of the Liberty called "The Cedars," and this had involved to some extent a change in that system of life in lodgings which hitherto had been the method of College life at Wells. The reasons for this belong to the general history of the College rather than to the record of the Triennial Festivals. But it will



be easily understood that the former students who visited Wells on this occasion were keenly interested in the exploration of the beautiful and convenient house and grounds and in criticising, and, generally speaking, approving the changes in the system of the College—changes, after all, which were in no sense sought after by the authorities who made them, but which were forced upon them by the difficulties of the War and of the period which followed it.

An assembly of students at "The Cedars" on the eve of the Triennial Festival of 1920 was, in fact, the special item of that particular Gathering. It was an opportunity for the statement of all the reasons which had led to this new venture, and many and hearty were the expressions of congratulation to all concerned. In the course of the evening the party resolved itself into a more formal "meeting." At this the Principal, Chancellor Hollis, first briefly explained the situation which had arisen. He was followed by Prebendary Lance, the Hon. Secretary to the Trustees and Governors, whose help from first to last had been invaluable and who had acted as Treasurer throughout, who gave details of the cost of the scheme. The Bishop of Gloucester then gave a memorable address which was the chief feature of the evening. He began by saying that he was now celebrating the Jubilee of his connection with Wells, and he was glad of this opportunity of passing on to a later generation some reminiscences of the foundation of the College which he himself had heard from the lips of Mr. F. H. Dickinson, who was one of the most prominent of the actual Founders. The facts which he proceeded to relate were of the greatest interest to those who were present. They are not repeated here because they have already been set out in the first chapter of this History.

## 42      **The History of Wells Theological College**

The time-table of this gathering gave a Celebration in the Cathedral at eight and a Special Service in the Nave, with a sermon by the Bishop of Ely (Dr. Chase) at 10.30. There was the usual luncheon in the "Bishop's Barn," a Garden Party at the Palace in the afternoon, and in the evening the Principal and Mrs. Hollis were "At Home" at "The Cedars." The following morning, at "The Cedars," the usual Conference was held and, inasmuch as this was the year when the Bishops of the Anglican Communion were assembled for Conference at Lambeth, the purpose of the meeting was naturally to listen to the Wells Bishops and others who were at work in the Foreign Mission Field. Among these were Bishop Thomas of Adelaide and Bishop Feetham of North Queensland.

This is a meagre account of the Triennial Festivals; but it would be impossible to describe the cordial enthusiasm of these meetings or to estimate the stimulating effect which they have had upon those who have been able to attend them.

It may be fairly claimed that no Theological College possesses such beautiful surroundings as Wells, and to those who return to Wells after an interval, it may be of some years, the charms of the place appear to be more exquisite than ever.

When we meet in the Cathedral on the eve of the Triennial for the Festival Evensong, the magnificence of the building, the dignity of the service, and the great assembly of like-minded worshippers impress us with a sense of the mutual relation of the great Wells Brotherhood with a force which is well-nigh overwhelming. And that feeling with which the Festival begins accompanies us throughout.

The solemn simplicity of the Great Eucharist on the next morning seems to make us actually conscious of our Communion with the generations of Wells

men who have passed away. The jubilant mid-day service with a sermon from some famous preacher carries on that spirit of corporate vocation which marks the day; later on, the genial luncheon in the quaint old Barn, and, afterwards (thanks to the hospitality for which Wells is famous), the party in some beautiful garden and the Evening Reception at the Palace, have given social opportunities for renewing the old friendships of College days. Alas that the sun and moon will not combine to make the day as long as that famous day of old "in the valley of Ajalon."

But, for those who can spare the time, there is the Conference yet to be enjoyed on the following day, and some yet more favoured ones may be able to remain in Wells for the rest of the week and to join the resident students in a Retreat conducted by some spiritual expert. This may appear to some to be a somewhat rhapsodical summary of a Wells man's experience of the Triennial. But the writer was present at the Festival in 1872 and has attended every one since. *Experto credite!*



## CHAPTER IV

### MR. GIBSON, PRINCIPAL 1880-1895

WE now return to the consecutive history of the College which we left for a time at the close of Chapter II. The years 1878 and 1879 represented a period of considerable strain and anxiety. During the winter 1878-9 Principal Church was compelled by ill-health to seek for a few months a less exacting sphere of work, and he was permitted by the Governors of the College to effect a temporary exchange with the Rev. G. H. Moberly, the eldest son of Bishop Moberly of Salisbury and Vicar of Duntisbourne Rous in Gloucestershire. Mr. Moberly was a man of great academical distinction: he had taken the Stanhope, the Ellerton and the Arnold Prizes, and had been a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He resided in Wells for the six months of the winter of which we are speaking, and his lectures as well as the great charm of his personality were much appreciated.

Mr. Elwes laid down the office of Vice-Principal at Easter 1879, having been appointed to the Vicarage of Over Stowey near Bridgwater. A year later Mr. Holmes resigned his place upon the Staff of the College and became Vicar of Wookey near Wells. In June 1879 the Bishop collated Mr. Church to a Residentiary Canonry in Wells Cathedral, and Mr. Church gave up his position as Principal in the spring of 1880. The Trustees and Governors,



*Photograph by A. H. Fry, Brighton*

THE BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER (DR. GIBSON, *right*)  
WITH  
THE ARCHDEACON OF CHICHESTER (VEN. E. L. ELWES, *left*)





upon his retirement, marked their sense of appreciation of Canon Church's connection with the College by the following unanimous Resolution :

“That the cordial thanks of the Trustees be presented to the Rev. C. M. Church for the zeal, ability and success with which, firstly as Vice-Principal, and secondly as Principal, he has administered the College during a period of twenty-five years, and that their acknowledgments be recorded that, by the Providence of God, the College under his guidance has been a blessing not only to this Diocese, but also to the Church at large.”

It will be realised that the practically simultaneous retirement of all the members of the Staff presented to the Governors of the College a problem difficult of solution. It was true that after a fairly prosperous existence for forty years Wells Theological College had made for itself a name and established traditions of which it would be hard to deprive it. Yet, at such a juncture, mistakes might well and innocently have been made which would have broken with the past or even have brought the history of the College to an end. It is matter for deep thankfulness that these difficulties were overcome and that, under a new Principal, Wells did more than maintain its former position of usefulness and distinction.

Speaking at the luncheon on the occasion of the Triennial gathering in 1884, Canon Church in proposing the health of the Bishop (Lord A. C. Hervey) recorded as one of the Bishop's greatest kindnesses to himself the fact that the Bishop had given him permission on his retirement in 1880 to name his successor. Certainly all who are interested in the College will agree that it was a happy Providence which led the Bishop, advised by the retiring Principal, to select as Canon Church's successor the Rev. E. C. S. Gibson. Mr. Gibson had been a

student at Wells in 1870, and afterwards served under Mr. Church as Chaplain and as Vice-Principal. During those six years both Bishop and Principal had become intimate with Mr. Gibson and had learnt to esteem very highly his ability both as a student and a teacher. In 1876 Dr. Gott, the Vicar of Leeds, himself a student of Wells in 1856, persuaded Mr. Gibson to leave Wells for a time in order to shape and organise the Clergy School which he was establishing in the great city of Leeds. There Mr. Gibson for four years did admirable work and the Clergy School was safely launched. Mr. Gibson was now, therefore, in a position to listen to the invitation which was addressed to him by his old friends and to return to Wells to take up the office which Canon Church was laying down.

In this way the year 1880, which might only too easily have been a year of catastrophe, became an epoch marked by the rekindling of ancient fires and by the infusion of new life and enthusiasm. Mr. Gibson brought to his task an unusual power of initiative and an insatiable hunger for work. He had also a reverence for the past and a wholesome regard for the "Wells tradition" which kept his energy on the right lines and directed his labours towards the revival and strengthening of all that was best in the Wells system. Moreover, he had at his side his old friend Canon Church, a man of singular humility and self-effacement, who was able to promote the many and varied plans of his young successor without the least shadow of jealousy or of patronage, and at the same time to be an encyclopædia of the history of the College ready to support his advice with precedents and examples. And thus it came about that the crisis of 1880 was safely passed. New wine was put into old bottles and—both were preserved!

For a short time Mr. Gibson worked single-

handed, though not without help from Canon Church and other friends. This, however, could not go on for long, as the fame of the new Principal had begun to spread and students were beginning to join the College in greater numbers—in 1880 there had been thirteen entries, in 1881 there were twenty-three. Accordingly it was necessary to enlist the services of one, or—as it soon appeared—of two Vice-Principals. And here the quality of the new Principal showed itself in his natural power of selection and judgment of men. The first to be appointed was the Rev. J. D. Murray, M.A., a former Scholar of St. John's College, Cambridge, whose record included the Crosse and the Lightfoot University Scholarships and a second Class in the Theological Tripos. Afterwards he had put in three years of good work at Delhi in connection with the Cambridge Mission, from which he had been obliged to retire in consequence of bad health and, particularly, of the failure of his eyesight.

Mr. Murray's period of office at Wells, which lasted till 1887, was of great and lasting service to the College. In particular his practical experience of missionary work in India was an asset full of inspiration to those who came under his influence. As a partial invalid with a growing failure of sight, he drew men to himself by those pathetic cords of sympathy which are so often the compensations divinely bestowed on those who suffer from ill-health. Of Mr. Murray it might well be said, "Out of weakness he was made strong."

Mr. Murray's health did not permit of his taking up his residence at Wells till August 1881, and it was necessary to supply Mr. Gibson with regular help at once. So at the beginning of 1881 the Rev. G. H. Fowler joined the Staff as Vice-Principal. Mr. Fowler was by nature a man of great physical energy, a keen "sportsman" in the best sense of



the word, whose character, by the very fact of its difference, seemed to complete the sum-total of necessary qualities for a "Theological Don" by combination with the character of Mr. Murray. Mr. Murray, a serious man, "going softly," and Mr. Fowler, alert and full of life, ready for whatever might turn up; yet both of them keen and cultivated students and men of a deeply devout life.

Mr. Fowler as a young man had been induced by a fraudulent prospectus to "try his luck" as a Colonist; and, at the "Eden" where, like Mark Tapley, he found himself, he was nearly starved to death. He never quite got over the physical effects of those discomforts, and no doubt the shortness of the period of his work at Wells, and, ultimately, his early death, were due to the fact that his constitution had been undermined by the privations of those early days. But, on the other hand, the knowledge of the world which those experiences had given him, bestowed on Mr. Fowler a breadth of outlook and a power of dealing with men which made his influence both at Wells and elsewhere fruitful to a quite exceptional extent. After those early vicissitudes Mr. Fowler won a Scholarship at St. John's College, Oxford, where he gained a First Class in the Theological School, and thenceforth became a keen student and a clear and incisive teacher of the "Queen of Sciences." Joining Mr. Gibson at Wells in January 1881, he carried on the office of Vice-Principal, in conjunction with Mr. Murray, till 1884, when, to the regret of all at Wells, he was compelled by ill-health to retire for a year to light parochial work and travelling. In 1885 Mr. Fowler became for two years Domestic Chaplain and Secretary to Bishop John Wordsworth of Salisbury, giving him assistance, and no doubt acquiring much erudition, while the Bishop was preparing his edition of the Vulgate. At the same

time he filled the office of Vice-Principal of Salisbury Theological College. In 1887 Mr. Fowler was chosen to be Principal of Leeds Clergy School, where he found a combination of Theological and Social subjects of observation for which his mind had a singular aptitude. But, alas, bad health again overtook him and, after struggling against weakness and pain for four years, he died at Leeds in 1891.

When Mr. Gibson was joined by Mr. Fowler in the spring of 1881, in addition to the ordinary College routine, there lay before him the prospect of the Triennial gathering on June 22 of that year. Fortunately Canon Church was at hand to help, and Mr. Gibson had himself taken an active part in the preparation for the meetings in 1872 and 1875. The Festival was a great success. Many desired to be present to "welcome the coming" of Mr. Gibson and to "speed the parting" of the dear old Principal, and upwards of a hundred sat down to the luncheon that day. The sermon of Bishop Harold Browne was on the text "Not a novice," and it may well be thought that his words sounded singularly appropriate in the ears of the young Principal just entering upon his new and anxious task.

One of the earliest innovations which Mr. Gibson made at Wells was to increase largely, though gradually as the numbers in the College grew, the opportunities offered to the men of gaining practical experience of parish work. Hitherto Wells had not given much scope for this beyond the conduct of services at the almshouses and help given in the night schools in winter. But at Leeds the system which the Clergy School had adopted was of an extremely practical type as befitted an institution of such a sort in the midst of a huge industrial town. Mr. Gibson, therefore, acting upon the experience gained at Leeds, at once set himself to find openings for practical work for the students at Wells. "Missions,"



as they were called, were set on foot in various districts, not only in Wells itself, but in Greenore, Priddy, Henton and elsewhere; and it became part of the life of the College, and not the least popular part, for the students to sally forth in couples on Sunday afternoons and at certain other times to minister to the people in these places. It is an interest which has flourished greatly ever since, and has been maintained with much zeal and enthusiasm : in some cases friendships between the students and their cottage people have been maintained for years, and a walk out to the old Mission has been contrived in connection with the visit to Wells for the "Triennial."

The care of all these Missions of course called for a larger number of men than Mr. Gibson found when he first took up the reins, but as time went on the students increased. It is true, indeed, that in December 1887 the Trustees and Governors passed a resolution that no more than thirty students should be resident in the College at the same time. But this rule has been less often observed in the fulfilment than in the breach. The Principal was often nonplussed by his most commendable pupils declaring their strong desire to remain for an additional term or two after the completion of their year at Wells. It was difficult to refuse such requests, but, on the other hand, it was quite impossible to postpone the admission of men who had been on the waiting list for a specific date for some years past. So it came about that the College was in danger of suffering for its own popularity and of being overwhelmed with numbers. In 1890, for instance, as the records of the Governors show, fifty-one men were in residence, of whom thirty-six were present in the same term; while in 1895, no less than sixty were in the College at one time or another during the year.



In the earlier period of the College history it had been customary from time to time to invite neighbours to preach in the College Chapel. This, at least, had become possible when the College, by the restoration of the Close Chapel, had a place of meeting at its independent disposal. Before 1876 such opportunities were limited to the Ember Seasons, when the Bishop's Examining Chaplains addressed the students, together with the candidates for Ordination, in the Palace Chapel. But when Mr. Gibson came to Wells he at once made use, for the benefit of the College, of the long list of distinguished men whom he already counted among his friends. It would be invidious to mention names. But, as one turns over the pages of the annual Calendar and reads the names of those who preached in the Chapel year by year, one sees how many of these are now, if they were not then, men of outstanding eminence in the Church, and one feels what a great advantage it was to the young men to see and to hear them.

And akin to this subject was the custom speedily introduced by Principal Gibson of using the College Chapel for Quiet Days and Retreats. Since 1887, when the custom was inaugurated with the help of the Rev. V. Stuckey Coles and of the Rev. W. Boyd Carpenter, afterwards Bishop of Ripon, there has always been a Retreat once or twice each year. And, here again, the men have been privileged to receive the teaching of some of the most experienced leaders of devotion.

When Mr. Gibson had been Principal for a few years and the number of his old pupils had become large, the thought occurred to him that it would be both pleasant and useful if he could gather some of them together for a Day of Devotion in some central place. Accordingly, in 1888, by the kind permission of the Rector, a Quiet Day for Old

Students was held by the Principal at Chislehurst. About twenty-five were present; and the scheme was welcomed so cordially that, by Mr. Gibson's arrangement, similar meetings were held in some of the following years by the Bishop of Marlborough (himself a student in 1857), and by others.

Finding this plan of reunion so acceptable, Principal Gibson launched another scheme. In the autumn of 1888 a "Reading Party" was held at West Malvern, of which the following account is from the *Guardian* of October 31, 1888:

"A most successful experiment was concluded on Saturday last of a Reading Party for the benefit of the younger clergy. Invitations had been issued in the summer by the Principal of Wells Theological College to those who had been his pupils there, for a course of lectures to be held at the Clergy House of Rest, West Malvern, from October 15 to 27. As a result of this, thirteen clergy attended for the whole or part of the time, representing nearly every period of his rule from its commencement. Two lectures were given daily by Prebendary Gibson on the Book of Job and the History of the English Church, and, during the first week, by the Rev. G. H. Sing, late Fellow of C.C.C., Cambridge, on the First Epistle of St. Peter. Conferences were held on two evenings in each week, at which papers were read by other members of the party on different matters connected with their work, and fully discussed by the remainder. Saturday, October 20, was kept as a Quiet Day conducted by the Dean of Worcester (Dr. Gott), himself an old Wells student, whose addresses, it is needless to say, were most helpful and served to add that aid to the spiritual life which the lectures gave to the intellectual. To complete the edification of the whole man, the glorious weather and the bracing air of the Malvern Hills contributed to the physical, as



the neighbouring beauties of scenery and architecture to the artistic, health of the party; the afternoons being devoted to visiting Hereford, Tewkesbury, Worcester and Eastnor as well as the neighbouring hills. At the conclusion of the week the thanks of the brethren were warmly expressed to the Principal for his excellent idea and for the successful accomplishment of it."

The usefulness of this gathering was, indeed, so marked that, while Mr. Gibson was Principal, he repeated the gathering at West Malvern every year, except in those years when the Triennial Festivals occurred.

The College owes much of its happiness to the brotherly spirit which exists among its students past and present, and this is largely due to the methods which Mr. Gibson thus adopted to maintain the connection between the College and those who had recently passed through it. Mention has been made at length in a former chapter of the Triennial Festivals, and so we need say little more about them now, but it will be remembered that, during Mr. Gibson's time at Wells, five such gatherings took place, and those not the least successful of the series. Of these the Festival of 1890 stands out pre-eminently, for that was the fiftieth anniversary of the existence of the College, and the Principal made it the occasion of the Dedication of the new Library which he had been instrumental in establishing in the ancient "Archdeacon's House." This has been fully set out in the last chapter. All these gatherings—at Wells, in London and at West Malvern—are indications of the healthy condition of the College at this period. A healthy heart must have at once its centripetal as well as its centrifugal action, its attraction to itself as well as its driving power outwards to the extremities. It is good to notice such fraternal gatherings of Wells men at



## 54      **The History of Wells Theological College**

Wells, while at the same time Wells men were spreading widely to fulfil their duties in every country and in every office of the Church. And it will be borne in mind that, during the sixteen years of Mr. Gibson's rule, the former students of earlier days were in many cases rising to distinction and receiving their call to positions of eminence. Thus, as has been recorded, the announcement of the first appointment of a Wells man to become an English Diocesan Bishop (Bishop Festing of St. Albans) was made at the Jubilee of the College in 1890. This was followed in 1891 by the appointment to the Diocese of Truro of Dr. Gott, who, like Dr. Festing, had always maintained an affectionate connection with the College. Dr. Gott was personally known to a large circle of Wells men. As Vicar of Leeds he opened widely the ranks of his great staff of curates to the students of Wells, and a large number of our men were trained in that famous school. His own great ability as a spiritual leader had often been placed at the service of the College in Quiet Days and Retreats both at Wells and at West Malvern. At the Triennial gatherings he was a familiar figure, and he was the preacher at the Festival in 1893, his sermon being published with the Calendar of the following year. His death in 1906 was a matter of real sorrow to his brother Wells men.

Among the pupils of Mr. Gibson himself were the men who became a little later the Bishop of Zululand (Dr. Vyvyan), the Archbishop of Brisbane (Dr. Donaldson, now Bishop of Salisbury), the Bishop of Adelaide (Dr. Thomas), the Bishop of Ballarat (Dr. Maxwell-Gumbleton), the Bishop of North China (Dr. Norris), and the Suffragan Bishops of Lewes (Dr. Southwell), of Hull (Dr. Gurdon) and of Swansea (Dr. Bevan), and the Coadjutor Bishop of Brisbane (Dr. Le Fanu). What perhaps is of equal importance, as an indication of the sort of training

that the College was giving at this period, lies in the fact that, during these years, so large a number of men volunteered for work in the Foreign Mission Field.

And here, perhaps, we should pause and look back to see what manner of men they were who were Mr. Gibson's helpers and colleagues in the work that he carried on at Wells, besides those who have been already mentioned. The first whom we should mention in this connection is Lord Arthur Charles Hervey, who became Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1869, a few months before Mr. Gibson entered the College as a student, and who died in 1894, shortly before Mr. Gibson ceased to be Principal. It was therefore as a student, and later as the junior member of the College Staff, that Mr. Gibson first became known to the Bishop; and the knowledge so acquired led the Bishop to give a ready ear to the suggestion of Canon Church that Mr. Gibson should be his successor in the office of Principal. The College has from the first enjoyed the favour and protection of the Bishops of Bath and Wells. The names of Bishop Law, Bishop Bagot and Lord Auckland appear among the promoters and friends of the College in the scanty records of its early days. But with the coming of Lord Arthur Hervey to Wells the relation of the Bishop to the College took on a new character. Lord Arthur was a past-master in the art of making friends, and his cordial sympathy, combined with an old-fashioned courtesy and a charm of great distinction, at once created between himself and Mr. Church, who was then Principal, the happiest relations of mutual confidence and respect. The two men, in fact, were not unlike in nature and in opinions, and the friendship thus early begun brought many advantages to the College with which Mr. Church was so closely connected. From the first the Bishop claimed a large measure of intimacy with the College, not only



officially, but also with the students individually. There must be very many old students who remember with gratitude the unaffected hospitalities of the Palace, in which the Bishop was so cordially seconded by Lady Arthur and all his family. But, besides these acts of social kindness, the Bishop lost no opportunity of helping the College forward in other ways. When the Rev. W. W. Liddell—whose name deserves to be commemorated on this account—came forward in 1875 and, with a large subscription, set on foot an Exhibition Fund, the Bishop at once became a subscriber and continued to be one until his death. The Bishop's own line of study led him to take a very special interest in the Old Testament—he was Chairman of the Old Testament Committee for the "Revised Version"—and, very early in his episcopate, he offered a Hebrew Prize which was competed for annually by the students so long as the Bishop lived, Mr. Gibson himself, by the way, having been the first to win the prize.

Sometimes the Bishop gave lectures to the students on subjects which he had made specially his own. Almost every year he made time to act as one of the judges for the Reading Prize, which was given (in 1884) by another good friend of the College—Mr. H. D. Skrine. And on occasions of great importance to the College, such as the Benediction of the Chapel in the Vicars' Close in 1876 and the Dedication of the Library in 1890, the Bishop spoke with an unmistakable regard for the College which was full of encouragement to those who were carrying on its work. In his speeches at the Triennial Festivals his cordiality was very marked, and his genuine interest in those gatherings was very happily impressive. It was a touching sight to see Lord Arthur at the Festival of 1893—the last at which he was present—when he



could no longer walk, seated in his place in the Nave of the Cathedral before the procession entered; but even on that occasion the Bishop was present at the luncheon and delivered one of his kindly speeches. By virtue of his office the Bishop was a Trustee of the College and President of the Governors, and Lord Arthur Hervey took no perfunctory view of his position. He was seldom absent from the Governors' Meetings, which, moreover, were generally held at the Palace, and he showed at all times an intimate knowledge of the affairs of the College and a keen interest in them.

Such was the man under whom Principal Gibson worked for almost the whole of his tenure of office, and we can well believe that in all his plans for the benefit of the College the Principal found in the Bishop a ready and sympathetic Chief. It was with a sad heart that Mr. Gibson recorded the death of Lord Arthur Hervey in his Report for 1894.

Another good neighbour of the College during Mr. Gibson's Presidency was Dean Edward Hayes Plumptre. In his speech at the luncheon on the occasion of the Triennial gathering of 1884, the Dean placed it on record that the existence of the Theological College at Wells was one of the chief attractions in his acceptance of the Deanery. And from the year of his arrival, 1881, till his death in 1891 he proved to be a devoted, kindly patron who showed his interest not only as a Trustee, but in more intimate and detailed ways, as a frequent lecturer and as a personal friend to many of the students. He was a man of a highly cultivated literary taste, and his speeches at the Triennial Festivals, and notably at the Dedication of the College Library, were full of happy phrases and delicately-worded wit. Towards the cost of that satisfactory restoration of the ancient "Archdeacon's House" Dean Plumptre contributed no less than a thousand

pounds. After his death a valuable selection of his books was purchased by a few of his friends and given to the College Library: these included the Dean's own works and those of his two brothers-in-law, F. D. Maurice and Archdeacon Hare.

Nor must we fail to make honourable mention of the junior members of the College Staff who, in their degree, helped to make the reign of Mr. Gibson such a successful period in this history. We have already mentioned Mr. Fowler and Mr. Murray. When Mr. Fowler's health compelled him to resign in 1884, his place as Vice-Principal was not filled up, but the Rev. A. Coode was appointed as Chaplain, an office which he filled for nine years and then for one year was Vice-Principal. Mr. Coode was a man of quite unusual charm. He had taken a respectable Honours Degree at Oxford and was a student at Wells in 1881. After three years' experience in parochial work as curate at Witney he returned to Wells, to become most happily not so much the teacher as the friend and the leader of the men. "Codex A," as he was affectionately called, gained an influence for good such as few could have attained. He was keen upon all field sports and an ardent ringer; his classes at Wells for bell-ringing in the Tower of St. Cuthbert's Church were very popular, and were not the least effective of his methods of "getting hold" of men. There were bitter lamentations when he left Wells in 1894 to become the Vicar of Cardynham in Cornwall, where he died three years later. A short biography was written of him in 1898 with a Preface by his Bishop, Dr. Gott, who appreciated his character very highly. A memorial of him stands in the Library at Wells in the form of a revolving bookcase, and on this there is a portrait of his very attractive face.

When Mr. Murray left the College in 1887 he was succeeded, after a short interval, by the Rev. F. A.



Clarke, a Fellow of C.C.C., Oxford, and a man of considerable attainments, literary, classical and theological. He was the nephew of one who was well known to many generations of students, Mr. A. A. Clarke, who lived at the top of the Close. "Artist Clarke," as he was usually called, was one whom all loved and respected, a personality simple to eccentricity and a most devoted and enthusiastic Churchman. Naturally, as the nephew of such an old friend of the College, Mr. F. A. Clarke received a hearty welcome at Wells, and he did good work until he left to become Vicar of Duntisbourne Rous in 1893, and subsequently of Cheddar, where he died in 1910.

These four men—Murray, Fowler, Coode and Clarke—with Mr. Ramsay, who only resided at Wells for rather more than one year, were Mr. Gibson's colleagues during the time of his Principalship. Almost the last act of Mr. Gibson as Principal was to appoint as Chaplain the Rev. G. A. Hollis, now Principal of the College.

The closing years of Mr. Gibson's residence in Wells were marked by the passing away of some of those whose names were associated with the early history of the College.

In 1891 there died one of the original founders of the College, Mr. F. H. Dickinson, of Kingweston, whose connection with those early days of 1840 have been related in our first chapter. So long as his strength permitted he was regular and zealous in his attendance at the Governors' Meetings, and his intellectual alertness and keen perception in business matters were of infinite value to the College during a period of fifty years.

In the same year there passed away at the age of ninety-six Mrs. Pinder, who had survived her husband, the first Principal of the College, for more than twenty years. She had lived, since she left



Wells, at West Malvern, where Mr. Gibson visited her each time he went there with his College Reading Party. To the end she maintained her affection for the College and made it the subject of her intercessions. When she died in 1891 a legacy of £1000, bequeathed by Canon Pinder, became payable to the College.

And yet another early friend of the College died in that same year (1891), the Rev. W. Pedder, who, after entering the College as one of the first students, was recalled to Wells as Vice-Principal in 1842, and worked under Canon Pinder for five years. For thirty years before his death he had been Vicar of Garstang in Lancashire, and so became a stranger to the later generations at Wells. But the early records of the College tell of his good work both as a lecturer and as a guide to the students in their visitation of the poor in Horrington, of which parish he was Vicar during his residence at Wells.

Meanwhile it was natural that the conspicuous success of the College, during the years to which this chapter relates, should attract the attention of the Church at large to the excellence of the training which men were receiving at Wells, and to the personality of the Principal under whom these results were being attained. It was, in fact, inevitable that Wells could not retain much longer the services of its much-valued Principal. No one, therefore, was surprised when, in 1895, Mr. Gibson received a call to accept a very distinguished position and to take up an even more important task of another kind. In that year Dr. Talbot was consecrated Bishop of Rochester, and the Principal of Wells was chosen to be his successor in the Vicarage of Leeds.

The close of Mr. Gibson's residence at Wells makes a natural period in our history of the College, and an obvious reason for ending our chapter here. It

will not be an unsuitable conclusion to the chapter if the resolution is here quoted which was unanimously passed by the Trustees and Governors of the College at their meeting on December 23, 1895. The words well express the mingled feelings with which all the friends of the College and of the Principal received the news of his resignation. The Resolution ran as follows :

“ Deeply regretting the loss which the College sustains by Mr. Gibson’s departure, the Trustees and Governors most heartily congratulate him on the high promotion which he has received from the Crown. They cannot allow his sixteen years of devoted service as Principal to close without thankfully acknowledging the energy, skill, devotion to duty and power of organisation which he has successfully exerted for the benefit of many generations of Wells students and with much blessing to the Church at large.”

## CHAPTER V

### PROSPEROUS TIMES

THE resignation of Dr. Gibson in 1895—he had taken his Doctor's degree on becoming Vicar of Leeds—made the friends of the College extremely anxious as to the future. And it was with feelings of intense relief that they learned that the Bishop had appointed the Rev. Hugh Penton Currie to the vacant office of Principal. Mr. Currie was already widely known to Churchmen, and his training had given him just the experience which was needed to fit him for the position to which he was now called. He had been curate of Shepton Beauchamp with Mr. Stuckey Coles and afterwards with Mr. Stephen Gladstone at Hawarden; he then served for two years as Chaplain at Cuddesdon, for four years as Principal of the Missionary College at Dorchester, and for seven years as Principal of St. Stephen's House at Oxford, from whence he came to Wells.

By the resignation of Mr. Ramsay, the office of Vice-Principal was also vacant at this time. This post was accepted by the Rev. Henry Leighton Goudge. Mr. Goudge had been a Scholar of University College, Oxford, where he gained a First Class both in Moderations and in "Greats." After four years as curate of St. Mark's, Leicester, he worked for two years at Salisbury Theological College. His name will be closely connected with Wells for many years after this. There was, it will be remembered, another officer already attached





*Photograph by Dawkes & Partridge, Wells*

THE VICARS CLOSE, WELLS  
(LOOKING NORTH)



to the Staff, for, as was stated in the last chapter, one of Dr. Gibson's last acts at Wells was to appoint the Rev. George Arthur Hollis with the title of "Chaplain." Mr. Hollis, like Mr. Goudge, was destined to be connected with the College for a very long period; he took his degree from Keble College, Oxford, with a First Class in Theology, and was ordained in 1894 to the curacy of St. James, Wednesbury.

It was a happy coincidence that, as in the case of Mr. Gibson's Principalship, so also in that of Mr. Currie's, a Triennial gathering was due in the first year of his residence at Wells. There was thus a peculiarly appropriate opportunity for the old students of the College to bid farewell to their former Principal and to make the acquaintance of the new one. It was natural, therefore, that the gathering of 1896 should have been attended by an unusual number of guests, and the opportunity was seized to present an address to Dr. Gibson with a purse of money from more than three hundred of his old friends. The preacher at the Festival was Dr. Festing, the Bishop of St. Albans, and his sermon was printed and circulated with the Calendar for 1897. It was the first time that the Festival Sermon had been preached by a Bishop who had been a student of the College, and the fact marked at once the increasing age of the College and its growing claims to distinction. Those who were favoured with an acquaintance with Mr. Currie will not need to be reminded of his singular charm of manner, and it may be safely affirmed that all who attended that Festival went home with the comforting assurance that the College was once more in safe hands.

The number of students continued to increase, and, in 1898, a fourth officer was appointed. This was the Rev. Frederick William Drake, who had



been a Scholar of Pembroke College, Oxford, and who, after taking a Second Class in Moderations and a Second Class in "Greats," was a student at Wells in 1894. He was a valuable addition to the Staff, not only on account of his intellectual capacity, but because his attractive personality made him a congenial and brotherly companion of the students. Mr. Drake received the title of "Bursar"—he was the first to be called by that name—but he soon succeeded to the title of "Chaplain," for Mr. Hollis, who had so far borne that designation, removed for a time to reside at Cheddar, where, for about three years, he acted as Chaplain to the Convalescent Home, though meanwhile he maintained his connection with the College as a regular lecturer.

The College Music received during these years considerable attention. Dr. Buck, the Cathedral Organist, who had succeeded Mr. Lavington in that office in 1895, was a musician of more than ordinary ability, and he did much to promote the knowledge of music among the students, not only by his regular conduct of the Services and his classes in the Art of Intoning, but also by occasional lectures on such subjects as "Plainsong" and "The Training of a Choir." It was at this time (1896), under the direction of Mr. Currie, that the Gregorian system of chanting was substituted for the Anglican chants which had hitherto been used in the College Chapel.

It will be remembered that in 1875 an Exhibition was instituted by the Rev. W. W. Liddell, the Vicar of Cowley, for the assistance of men who desired to remain more than a year in the College but could not afford to do so. Mr. Liddell died in 1892, and the Exhibition consequently lapsed. Since that time no subscriptions had been sought for this purpose, chiefly because the generosity of old students had been largely drawn upon for the restoration of the "Archdeacon's House," and for

other pressing needs. Principal Currie determined to revive the Exhibition Fund and to use it for the payment of an Organist Student who should be responsible for the conduct of the music in the College services. The first holder of this Exhibition was Mr. M. O. Hodson, who is now the Archdeacon of Natal.

Akin to the Chapel services was the compilation and publication of a Book of Devotions for the special use of the students of Wells. From an early date (1875) it had been the custom for the men resident in No. 16, Vicars' Close, to meet for the recitation of Sext and Compline, and, when the Chapel in the Close was restored in 1876, these Offices were said therein by all the College. The books thus used for twenty years were now worn out, and it seemed a suitable occasion to print a little volume which should contain all the Forms of Prayer which a theological student or a young priest might need. The liturgical erudition and skill of the Rev. W. H. Frere, who had been a student of the College in 1886, were already recognised, and accordingly he was asked in 1896 to draw up such a book as was required : this he did, and the result was the manual well known to all Wells men as "The Wells Office Book."

The placid flow of the College life at Wells is not often arrested by the calls of the outside world, but, from time to time, such calls have come and have found a ready response. The South African War was one of these calls, and it is interesting to note the part which Wells men took for their country's sake in that anxious though ultimately successful struggle. It is recorded in the Calendar for 1901 that some students had postponed their coming to Wells, or had left the College for a time, in order to go to the Front as combatants. Others claimed their share in the experiences of war by virtue of

their existing offices : thus the Rev. C. F. Baines and the Rev. S. Smith served in South Africa as being already Chaplains to the Forces, while Archdeacon Holbech went through the whole period of the siege of Kimberley in his capacity as Rector of that place. Others, volunteered for work as Chaplains, among whom were the Rev. H. K. Southwell (now Bishop of Lewes), the Rev. H. A. Tudor, the Rev. R. T. Gardner, the Rev. J. W. Leary (now Archdeacon of Pondoland), the Rev. W. A. Hewett, the Rev. A. L. Helps, and perhaps others. And thus the sounds of war, by the power of sympathy, broke the tranquillity even of the Vicars' Close.

It was at about this time (1900) that the College sustained the loss of Canon Buckle, who had been a "Governor" since 1870 and Canon Residentiary since 1887. During all that time he had shown himself a constant friend, and at his death he bequeathed his books to the College Library. His place as Canon was taken by the Rev. T. S. Holmes, who was Vice-Principal 1877-1880, and had maintained his interest in the College during the eleven years that he had been Vicar of Wookey. In the following year (1901) Mr. H. D. Skrine of Claverton Manor died. He had been a zealous Governor for many years. It was by him that the Reading Prize was given in 1884 and continued till his death ; nor was this a mere gift of money, for, almost to the last, he made a point of being himself present as one of the adjudicators of the competition.

It may be stated here that the Reading Prize was refounded in 1905 by the generosity of an old student and constant friend of the College, Prebendary Farrer, now Archdeacon of Wells. At his suggestion, in 1913, a change was made in the allocation of the prize, and it is now given, not annually after a formal trial, but terminally, in



accordance with the opinion of the Principal and the Staff, to the student who has read the Lessons most effectively in the College Chapel during the term.

Meanwhile the College, under Currie, was flourishing to a remarkable degree. Mr. Currie's fitness for his post exhibited itself not only in his intellectual ability and his great and varied experience in the conduct of a Theological College, but also, and particularly, in his sweetness of temper and his genial manner with all. The good work which he did in the lecture-room was equalled, if indeed it was not even surpassed, by that which he wrought in the brotherly and informal conferences which the men enjoyed with him as they strolled with him in the Vicars' Close or sat by his fireside. It was, therefore, with profound grief that his former pupils, and all others who were connected with Wells, received the news of Mr. Currie's unexpected death, after an operation, in the spring of 1903. He was buried just outside the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral, where the College services, which were so dear to him, are carried on. In his memory an Exhibition was endowed to be called "The Currie Exhibition," and a Brass, designed by Mr. Heywood Sumner, was placed at the back of the Stall which the Principal used to occupy in the Lady Chapel. The inscription, written in Latin by his friend Dr. Robertson, the Bishop of Exeter, is surrounded by a border of flowering evergreens expressing a memory "blossoming in the dust": at the four corners the symbols of the Evangelists tell of the Gospel which he preached, while in the centre of the ornamental border, above and below, the Cross and the Chalice represent his Faith. What Mr. Currie was to the College can never be justly estimated in this world, but his loving discipline, his genial friendship, and his deep reverence and devotion will always be an

inspiration to those who knew him, and especially to those who were students under him.

With the death of Mr. Currie (1903) there came again one of those crises in the history of the College which must always be full of anxiety to those who have its welfare at heart, and especially to those who bear the responsibility of appointing the new Principal. Yet it must be thankfully said that the difficulty of making the appointment this time was less arduous than on some of the previous occasions, because there was already upon the Staff of the College one whose eminence as a scholar and a theologian, and whose personal character, indicated him clearly as a suitable person to succeed Mr. Currie. This was the Rev. H. L. Goudge, who, as was stated a few pages back, had joined the College as Vice-Principal at the time of Mr. Currie's appointment as Chief. His high academical record and his antecedents were then mentioned, and, in the eight years which had since elapsed, Mr. Goudge had been doing good work and assimilating "the tradition." His lectures and sermons were definite and incisive to an unusual degree, and his manner in social intercourse with the men was always appreciative and kind, though possibly sometimes not without terrors to the young and foolish. While Currie lived, Mr. Goudge—probably not without intention—left to the Principal a large share of that social familiarity with the students for which, as he knew, Currie was so singularly well fitted. But, on the death of Currie, the mantle of his gentleness appeared to have fallen on his successor, and henceforth Mr. Goudge seemed to have added to his many other appropriate qualities a large measure of that spirit of good-fellowship in which Mr. Currie had so singularly excelled. Thus the College safely passed another turning-point in its course and found itself



once more, after a brief interval of trepidation, sailing in smooth waters. This happy state of things was very greatly due to the fact that, besides the new Principal, the College retained two other officers who had been for some time upon the Staff. These other two were the Rev. G. A. Hollis, who had joined the College as Chaplain in 1895, and who now became Vice-Principal, and the Rev. F. W. Drake, who still occupied the post of Chaplain which he had already held for five years. To these was now added the Rev. H. S. S. Clarke, who took the fourth place on the Staff with the title of "Bursar." Of Mr. Clarke we may here say that he was an Exhibitioner of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and took a Second Class in the Classical Tripos. He was a student at Wells in 1900, and afterwards was curate of Meltham for three years. He did good work at Wells till 1906, and then returned to his former curacy.

And here perhaps we ought to pause for a few moments to take notice of the losses which the College was sustaining at this period by the death of well-tried friends. For Wells has always possessed the magic power of attaching not only to herself, but also to each other, the affection of the men who have sojourned in the Vicars' Close and beneath the shadow of those tranquil towers. There is a strong solidarity among Wells men, and the mutual interest in each other of its present and former students, scattered widely as they are over the world, is no empty or unpractical sentiment. When, therefore, old friends of the College pass away, Wells men both past and present note the fact and join in sympathy with the mourners. In 1903 two men laid down their work on earth of whom the College had good reason to be proud—John Wogan Festing, Bishop of St. Albans, and Francis John Mount, Archdeacon of Chichester. The former



of these was a student at Wells in 1860, and had maintained a close interest in all that appertained to the College ever since. He was seldom absent from a Triennial Festival, and in 1896 he was the preacher. There must be many who still remember the cordial and brotherly way in which on that occasion, both in sermon and in subsequent speech, the Bishop of St. Albans addressed us.

Archdeacon Mount, a student at the College in 1855, was a man of singular attractiveness, whose effective gentleness in his own Archdeaconry has not been forgotten to this day. To Wells he always looked for inspiration; there he sought his curates; and Wells men regarded him with pride as representing the type of parish priest which Wells, at its best, is capable of producing.

It may be noted as a happy coincidence, that the Archdeaconry of Chichester was presided over at this period by three Wells men in succession: the predecessor in the office of Archdeacon Mount was Russell-Walker, who was a student in 1861, while his successor for eleven years was Elwes, who was a student in 1871, Chaplain and Vice-Principal 1875-79, and who is now the writer of these pages.

In the year following the one of which we have been speaking (1904), the College lost two other good friends. One of these was Prebendary Buller, who was a student in 1853 and afterwards spent the whole of his ministerial life in Somerset. He was for some years Proctor for the Diocese in Convocation, and, as such, became a Governor of the College. As an old-established resident in the Diocese he was a familiar figure in Wells, and his connection with the College was at all times intimate and sympathetic.

The other who passed away in this year was Prebendary Grafton, of whom mention has already been made as having been Vice-Principal from 1861 to 1875, while, ever since his retirement from the

Staff, as Vicar in succession of Highbridge and of Castle Cary, he never failed to be a "neighbour" in the best sense of the word. The College Library, after their death, was enriched with valuable books from the collections of both these friends.

Nor is it possible for anyone who knew Mr. Grafton to think of him apart from his two devoted sisters. These ladies shared to the full their brother's attachment to the College, and, at the death of the last survivor of them in 1908, a sum of £2000 was handed by her executor to the Secretary of the College to form the endowment of an Exhibition Fund in memory of William Augustus Grafton.

But, while this history must record such losses as these, it must also fulfil the pleasanter task of mentioning the honours which were falling in increasing number and eminence upon members of the College. The year 1904 is notable for the appointment of the Rev. St. Clair Donaldson to be Bishop of Brisbane, and he took with him to Australia as his Archdeacon the Rev. H. F. Le Fanu (who became his Coadjutor in 1915), and, as his Chaplain, the Rev. F. Batty, to join the already large contingent of Wells men in that continent. Still more, in this respect, was 1905 "*annus mirabilis*," for in that year the Bishop of Brisbane was advanced to be an Archbishop, while Dr. Gibson, the Vicar of Leeds, was consecrated as Bishop of Gloucester, Dean Holbech of Bloemfontein was made Bishop of St. Helena, and the Rev. A. N. Thomas was appointed to be Bishop of Adelaide. Thus at the Triennial Festival in 1905, when the record number of 285 students came together to listen to the wise words of the Bishop of London, the spirit of the meeting was in an unusual degree one of rejoicing and mutual felicitation, and Dr. Gibson, who was present, was well-nigh overwhelmed by the congratulations of his friends and former pupils.

## 72      **The History of Wells Theological College**

On the other hand, the year 1905 was one of those periods of change among the junior members of the Staff which are seldom free from regret. It was in this year that the Chaplain, the Rev. F. W. Drake, felt it his duty to leave Wells and to return to his former scene of pastoral labour in London—at St. John's, Wilton Road—where he carried on a remarkable work till 1914, when he accepted the charge of Kirby Misperton in Yorkshire. The loss to Wells in the departure of Mr. Drake was no light one, for, since his appointment as "Bursar" in 1898, he had become identified with the life of the College in no ordinary way. His relation to the students was rather that of an elder brother than of a "Don," and the wealth of his geniality and the treasures of his spiritual power were alike placed at the disposal of all the men who came in contact with him. His place as Chaplain was taken by Mr. H. S. S. Clarke, who had now been "Bursar" for three years, while the Rev. D. Frere, who was student in 1902, accepted the post of "Bursar." These arrangements unfortunately did not last long, for, at the end of 1906, Mr. Clarke returned to parochial work, and Mr. Frere, whose health began to fail as soon as he returned to Wells, became so ill at Christmas 1906 that he was obliged to go home, and in February 1907 he died. His character and work had given great promise of a successful career, and there was genuine sorrow over his early death.

Instead of these two much-valued officers, the post of "Bursar" was taken by the Rev. Charles William Chastel de Boinville, who was formerly an Exhibitioner of Exeter College, Oxford, and took his degree in 1900 with a Second Class in the History School. He was a student at Wells in 1901, and served in a curacy at Battersea for four years till he was recalled to the College. It may be added here



that he occupied the office of "Bursar" for five years, to the great advantage of the students, and then became Vicar of Martock. Mr. Clarke's successor as Chaplain was the Rev. J. S. B. Brough, who, after taking his degree at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, with a Third Class in the Classical Tripos, became a Student at Leeds Clergy School, and thence passed to a curacy at Brighouse. When his call came to Wells, he had recently accepted the post of Domestic Chaplain to the Bishop of Wakefield, but, by the kindness of the Bishop, he was set free to join our College Staff. Mr. Brough filled the post efficiently for four years, and especially made his mark in interesting the students in social matters. He left the College in 1910 and, after spending two years in parochial work, he became "Candidates Travelling Secretary" for S.P.G., and died in 1918.

The years which immediately followed were happily uneventful. For a short time there were no changes in the personnel, and, partly on this account, and partly because of the distinguished ability of some of the students, the work of the College proceeded with more than usual effectiveness. Thus the year 1907 was made remarkable by certain members of the College gaining University Honours—one (Mr. Bicknell) taking at Oxford the Senior Hall-Houghton Prize and the Denyer and Johnson Prize, while another, at Cambridge (Mr. Saunders), secured a First Class in the Moral Science Tripos.

Certain matters belonging to this period deserve special mention. The first is the opening of the Theological College at Cheshunt in 1908 under the auspices of the Bishops of London (Dr. Winnington Ingram), Southwark (Dr. Talbot) and St. Albans (Dr. Jacob). The College was inaugurated in the belief that the existing Institutions did not provide sufficient accommodation for the graduates who

desired to be prepared for Holy Orders. But Cheshunt had hardly got into its stride before the War came and made things next to impossible for all Theological Colleges. Since the War the number of candidates for Holy Orders has sadly diminished, and we at Wells feel a sympathy with Cheshunt which arises from a genuine fellow-feeling. Considering the urgent need for a much larger number of clergy, we can only hope and pray that a sufficient number of men may come forward to fill all the Theological Colleges, both new and old.

Another matter which should be referred to here is the active part which the College at Wells, under the fostering and guiding hand of the Principal, began to take in "the Student Christian Movement." In 1910 the College, for the first time, had a tent of its own at the Baslow Conference. The fact is an indication of the strong and practical interest in the many-sided work of Foreign Missions which was taken at Wells. And, as a further proof of this practical interest just at this period, it may be said that, in the year of which we are speaking (1910), three former students volunteered for work abroad, viz. Mr. Anderson for Rangoon, Mr. Johnston for the Oxford Mission to Calcutta, and Mr. Simpson for South Tokyo. In addition to these, no less than five of the men who at this date went out in connection with the Archbishop's Mission to Western Canada were Wells men.

A wish had often been expressed both within and without the College that the students might have the advantage of learning systematically how to teach in Schools: the matter had been deferred, owing to the fulness of the existing curriculum and to the difficulty of obtaining well-qualified teachers. But in 1910 a beginning, and an effective one, was made in this direction when the Rev. W. H. Campbell, Warden of St. Christopher's College, Blackheath,



spent a week at Wells and gave a series of illuminating lectures on this subject.

The death of some of the older students should here be mentioned. Mr. Hopkins, who died in 1907, was one of the very earliest men who joined the College in 1840: his name occurs as the tenth man who entered. He responded generously to the appeals which came to him from Wells from time to time, and he had the experience, which in these days of rapid changes must be very uncommon, of having spent his whole ministerial life (sixty-seven years) in one parish, that of Holdenhurst near Bournemouth.

In 1908 there passed away two men well worthy of being remembered as good and constant friends of Wells—the Master of Charterhouse, more intimately known, perhaps, as Canon Jelf of Rochester, and Dr. Frank Johnson, who served as Suffragan Bishop of Colchester under his old friend Dr. Festing, the Bishop of St. Albans. Both these men were students at Wells in the year 1867.

Prebendary F. A. Clarke died in 1910. He had been Vice-Principal 1886–1893, and both then and later, as Vicar of Cheddar, he was closely and cordially associated with the College.

The year 1910 was again a season of change. In that year Dr. Jex-Blake resigned the Deanery of Wells and went to live in London. His attitude to the College was always one of courtesy and friendship. He was an unusually competent man of business, and his advice and guidance, as a Trustee, in the affairs of the College, were often sought and made use of with the happiest results. He was succeeded by Dr. J. Armitage Robinson, a man of European fame as a theologian and scholar. His coming to Wells was naturally welcomed with keen pleasure by all who were connected with the College, and he has since been a kind friend and neighbour, whose erudition has many times been



placed at the service of the students in lectures and addresses and conferences.

At this time also (1909) the College sustained the loss of the Vice-Principal, the Rev. G. A. Hollis, who left Wells in 1910 to undertake the charge of the parish of Armley, near Leeds. Mr. Hollis had been working at the College under various titles since 1895—his appointment in that year as Chaplain had been one of the last acts of Principal Gibson—and the value of his work and influence it would be hard to over-estimate. Fortunately (if we may anticipate a little) his absence from Wells did not last long, for in 1919 he was welcomed back as Principal. His successor in the office of Vice-Principal was the Rev. Charles Tunnacliff Dimont, who was a Scholar of Worcester College, Oxford, and won a Second Class in *Literis Humanioribus* in 1895; in the following year he was a student at Wells and was ordained to the curacy of Mirfield; after remaining there for two years, he worked under Principal Burrows at the Leeds Clergy School for seven years; and for four years was Vicar of Holy Trinity, Halifax. When, therefore, Mr. Dimont returned to Wells he was fully equipped by varied experiences for his position on the Staff, and, during the four years that he remained at Wells, he proved his competence for his important office. In particular, he made his mark both in the College and in the city as a man whose sympathies were very keenly interested in social subjects, and who was fully capable of directing men's minds intelligently in all such matters. In 1913, to the regret of all at Wells, Mr. Dimont left our College to become the Principal of the Theological College at Salisbury.

It was about this time (1910) that Mr. Brough resigned his position as Chaplain. He was succeeded by the Rev. Robert Marle, who retained the office till 1913. Mr. Marle was a graduate of Hertford

College, Oxford, and a student at Wells in 1906. After his ordination he was curate for three years at Wigan, where he gained a considerable insight into industrial questions and realised the fascination of the work of the Church in great cities. These social sympathies gave a special character to his influence in the College. He also did some valuable work in connection with the catalogue of the College Library. When he left Wells, it was to return to work in a large parish in Liverpool.

But this period had in store for the College a more serious and anxious change than any of these. In 1911 Dr. Goudge accepted the Principalship of Ely Theological College, and so, to the deep regret of all, his work at Wells came to an end.

Dr. Goudge had now been connected with Wells for fifteen years, and each year had added to his reputation as a preacher, as a teacher, and as a leader of men. It was only natural that such a man should receive from time to time urgent invitations to work elsewhere; and the health of Mrs. Goudge, unfortunately, compelled him to feel that it was desirable that she should reside in a drier climate than that of Wells. Thus it came about that, amid general lamentations, and not without reluctance on his own part, Dr. Goudge resigned his office of Principal into the hands of the Bishop.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Goudge was Principal of Ely Theological College for ten years. In 1921 he became Professor of New Testament Interpretation at King's College, London. In 1923 he was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, in succession to Dr. A. C. Headlam, who had become Bishop of Gloucester in place of Dr. Gibson.

## CHAPTER VI

### PEACE AND WAR

EARLY in 1911 Dr. Goudge left Wells to take up his new duties at Ely. In his place the Bishop of Bath and Wells appointed the Rev. Richard Godfrey Parsons, who was at the time Fellow and Tutor of University College, Oxford. Mr. Parsons had earned many distinctions at Oxford: he had been a Demy of Magdalen and had gained a Second Class in Moderations, a First Class in Greats, and a First Class in the Theological School; and, in addition, had been elected to be a "Liddon Student."

At this time also Mr. Chastel de Boinville gave up his place on the Staff to become Vicar of Martock, and the Rev. Robert Henry Lightfoot became Bursar in his stead. Mr. Lightfoot, too, had a famous academical record, having been a Scholar of Worcester College, Oxford, where he took a First Class in Theology and became a "Liddon Student"; he also subsequently gained the Senior Septuagint Prize and the Senior Greek Testament Prize.

An important change, also, took place at this time on the executive side of the College, for, in this year, Canon Church resigned the post of Hon. Sec. to the Trustees and Governors, a post which he had held for twenty-six years, and to his office there succeeded the Rev. Edwin Mildred Lance, who had been a student of the College in 1884 and was now the Vicar of Barrow-Gurney near Bristol.





*Photograph by Danckes & Partridge, Wells*

THE VICARS CLOSE, WELLS  
(LOOKING SOUTH)



By a happy coincidence, as has been the case on more than one occasion, the first year of the new Principal was also the year of a Triennial Festival. Thus, as when Mr. Gibson and when Mr. Currie began their labours, a great company of former students assembled to offer their good wishes to the new Principal for the work that he was now beginning. It was a notable occasion not only because of the large number who were present (300), but by reason of the sermon which was delivered by the Bishop of Gloucester, who thus added a fresh item to the long roll of services which he has rendered to the College.

It was about this time (1908-1911) that a fund was raised, largely at the instigation of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, for the exploration of the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey and for placing them in a stable condition. It is of interest to record the fact here, because the Bishop took into his confidence the students of Wells Theological College and issued to them a special appeal for financial help. He was not mistaken in supposing that the College would share his enthusiasm in the matter, and no inconsiderable portion of the £2716 which the Bishop raised was contributed by our students past and present.

We have spoken in a former chapter of the way in which, in 1910, under the auspices of Dr. Goudge, the College at Wells began to take part in the meetings of the Student Christian Movement. These interests were fostered by Mr. Parsons, and six of our students attended as delegates the International Conference of the Movement at Liverpool in January 1912. Somewhat analogous to this, in the sense of an enlargement of theological sympathies, was the invitation given to a Congregational Minister of distinction, the Rev. H. C. Carter, to lecture to the students upon the subject



of "The Congregational Churches." The lecture formed a suitable conclusion to the systematic inquiries carried on by some Study Circles on the subject of Nonconformity: it was a lecture of no common interest and it was printed at the request of those who heard it.

It was often the case while Mr. Currie or Dr. Goudge was Principal that there were no less than forty students in residence at Wells: this notwithstanding the rule that was laid down in the early days of Dr. Gibson that the number should never exceed thirty. But in 1912 the Trustees and Governors, following the advice of the Principal, resolved that, for the future, the number of students should not be more than thirty-five and the Staff should be reduced from four to three. It was in consequence of this self-denying ordinance that the Bursar, Mr. Marle, resigned his office in the College and returned to parish work. The reduced numbers tended undoubtedly to an increased efficiency in the work done and, what was a point of great importance, the Principal and the other members of the Staff were able to enjoy a more individual knowledge of the men and a closer friendship with them than had been possible when there were so many in residence.

It was in 1912 that the death occurred of the Rev. Sir James Erasmus Philipps, Prebendary of Salisbury, who had been a student in 1848, and whose record since had been a remarkable one, especially in connection with Foreign Missions. He was the founder of St. Boniface College and of the Sisterhood of St. Denys at Warminster, where he was Vicar for many years. Both these institutions have done, and are still doing, a great and successful work in preparing men and women for the Mission Field. Sir James Philipps was a constant friend of the College at Wells throughout

his long life, and his tall and striking figure was familiar to all who attended the Triennial Festivals.

Speaking of Sir James Philipps reminds one of the cause of Missions which he did so much to advance. We do not, in this History, mention the names of those who from year to year went out from Wells to the Foreign Mission Field, but the Annual Report of the College was seldom issued without allusion to the fact that several former students had volunteered for service abroad. The names of these have been made familiar by the yearly statement issued to the members of the Wells Missionary Association. Australia, in particular, has been a sphere of labour much favoured by Wells men, and, in the year of which we are writing (1912), our fourth Australian Bishop was consecrated in the person of the Rev. J. O. Feetham, who, after gaining valuable experience as head of the Dubbo Bush Brotherhood, was consecrated Bishop of North Queensland. In this same year eight Wells men left England for work overseas, making up the number of those who held Missionary or Colonial appointments to ninety-seven, of whom seven were Bishops.

Elsewhere we have spoken more fully of the property of the College, and those who pass down the Vicars' Close may well envy the possessors of those beautiful houses. But the ownership of ancient buildings is not a very remunerative form of investment, and the College from time to time has been faced by considerable demands for expenditure upon its house property. In 1913 the houses in the Close which belonged to the College were carefully overhauled by a competent surveyor and, as a result, a sum of about £1500 was spent by the Trustees on making the condition of the houses thoroughly satisfactory and bringing the accommodation up to date. The houses are



now not only in a good state of repair, but they also offer—as Church property should—a standard which might well be followed by landlords in a similar position.

The year 1913 saw the departure from Wells of the Rev. C. T. Dimont, who had been Vice-Principal since 1909. He left us to become the Principal of Salisbury Theological College, where he has done admirable work ever since. The loss to Wells by his leaving was very considerable: not only was he a sound theologian with a capacity for teaching ripened by four years of experience at Wells, but his observant and sympathetic mind had gleaned in the large parishes of the north of England, where his parochial lot was cast, a familiarity with industrial life and a grasp of industrial problems which was far more than ordinary. Consequently it was not only in the College that Mr. Dimont had made his mark, but in the city also, and the resignation of his position at Wells was genuinely lamented by a large circle of friends.

Into Mr. Dimont's position as Vice-Principal Mr. Lightfoot naturally stepped. Mr. Lightfoot had already shown, in the two years which he had spent at Wells as Chaplain, that he possessed that combination of teaching-ability and wise sympathy which was needed for his new and higher office. His expert knowledge of theology was indeed already recognised upon a wider field than Wells, for, even at this date, he had been twice chosen by the University of Oxford to be a Public Examiner, and the Archbishop of Canterbury had appointed him to be one of his Examining Chaplains.

The new Chaplain of the College in place of Mr. Lightfoot was the Rev. Geoffrey Lionel Porcher, who, after taking First Class Honours in Theology from Wadham College, Oxford, was a student at Wells in 1907, and then gained parochial experience



in a two years' curacy in London and in a curacy of three years at Armley, near Leeds, under Mr. Hollis, the present (1923) Principal of the College. It may be said here that Mr. Porcher fully justified his appointment and did much to carry the College through what was destined to be the most difficult period of its history. When, in 1915, the War compelled the College to dispense with his services as Chaplain, Mr. Porcher first became assistant curate of Burnham and then was collated by the Bishop into the Prebend and Rectory of Dinder, and both from Burnham and from Dinder he was able to give much valuable assistance as a lecturer at Wells. In 1918, after serving abroad as a Chaplain to the Forces, Mr. Porcher became Vicar of Burnham, in succession to Prebendary Hayes Robinson, and there, as a near neighbour, his help has often, and in many ways, been of great value to the College.

Mr. Porcher, however, was not at liberty to take up his work at Wells till three months after his appointment, and the interval was cleverly bridged over by the Principal by inviting two able young men to come down from Oxford, where both of them were Tutors at Christ Church, and fill the place of Mr. Porcher during the Michaelmas Term. These men, who, at an anxious moment, so willingly gave their efficient help, were the Rev. G. K. A. Bell, who had himself been a student of the College in 1906, and the Rev. A. E. J. Rawlinson. They brought to the College a very fresh and stimulating atmosphere, and, in turn, it is believed, they found much pleasure in their short sojourn beneath the tranquil towers of Wells.

While we are on the subject of the teaching of the College at this period, it should be noted that in November 1913 a week was devoted to lectures and demonstrations upon the methods of teaching in

Sunday Schools. These courses were very successfully carried out by the Rev. M. Ware, Director of Sunday School work in the Diocese of Winchester, assisted by Miss Steward, the Kindergarten expert of the Sunday School Institute. Nor were these lectures without speedy fruit which, but for the War, would in all probability have proved to be of permanent interest and benefit to the students of the College. Within a few months the Sunday School in the parish of St. Thomas, Wells, was placed under the care of the students, with the Chaplain, Mr. Porcher, as the superintendent; and therein the system of teaching was modelled on the "reformed" lines, with the happiest results.

This was the year (1913) in which the Rev. Frank Norris was consecrated Bishop of North China, a country in which he had worked since 1889. It was also the year in which the Rev. F. Gurdon, who had been Vicar of Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, since 1906 and Prebendary of St. Paul's since 1908, became the Bishop Suffragan of Hull. In the previous year (1912) the Rev. Arthur Glossop was appointed Archdeacon of Nyasa, after a ministry in that Diocese of more than twenty years.

The Exhibition Fund was enriched this year (1913) by a legacy of £100 from Prebendary Coleman, whom many generations of students will remember with affection as their neighbour in the Vicars' Close. Mr. Coleman's services to the College as Hon. Sec. of the Trustees and Governors will be spoken of at greater length in our next chapter.

The year 1914 began with peaceful prospects and with every anticipation of success. Notwithstanding the recent rule that the numbers should not exceed thirty-five, there were thirty-eight students in residence, and the Triennial Festival, which was held in May, was among the most enjoyable of the series, marked as it was by a noble sermon by



Bishop Talbot of Winchester; by the presence and speeches of Archbishop Donaldson of Brisbane, and by a meeting on the morning after the Festival, when striking speeches were made by Mr. H. J. Torr, Mr. Albert Mansbridge and the Rev. G. A. Hollis upon the subject of "The Church and the Disaffected." Wells, not less than the rest of England, was at peace and completely free from any apprehension of the coming strife. When, in August, the thundercloud of war burst, the Principal lost no time in concentrating his ability on the problem which lay before him. The number of students at once, and rapidly, went down. There were forty students in residence in August: of these ten were ordained in September and ten joined the Army. Twenty freshmen had been expected at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term, but of these only one came, and he only because he had been rejected for the Army on account of defective eyesight. It became clear to the Principal, after carefully considering the circumstances in prospect as well as in being, that in all probability there would not be more than nine men in the College in January 1915, and most likely not more than two when the Trinity Season came.

The Principals of all the Theological Colleges met together in London on September 8 to survey the conditions, and they drew up the following wise resolutions:

1. That there is no positive barrier to the enlistment of Theological College students.

2. That, ultimately, each man must decide his course of action himself.

3. That it is quite possible that a man may be so clearly called to continue his training for the Ministry that he is quite justified in not offering himself for military service. It is also possible that, with an equally clear sense of vocation, a man may offer for



military service during the present War as part of his training for the Ministry. Either line of duty is equally loyal to the country and to the Church.

4. That it is extremely important that every man who does not offer himself for the service of the country should be able to explain why he does not do so; and that he should make it his duty to give any form of national service which may be consistent with the continuance of his Theological College training.

We may readily believe that it was a very difficult matter, both for the Staff and for the students, to carry on the work of the College with calmness and concentration in the face of all the distractions of that terrible time. Of course, too, in proportion as the students became fewer and fewer, the income of the College steadily declined. It was soon found advisable that Mr. Porcher, the Chaplain, should accept the curacy of Burnham. Next it became necessary to realise that neither the number of students nor the banker's pass-book permitted the retention of more than one member of the Staff; and, after much grave consideration, it was decided that the Principal should take up some work which offered itself in London, while retaining his title of Principal and exercising some measure of supervision over the work of the College. Thus Mr. Lightfoot remained at Wells to "carry on" single-handed with the few students who were still in residence.

It was a time of great perplexity, and various schemes were proposed at this period for the amalgamation of our College with one or another similar institution. Thus the Principal of Farnham offered, under certain conditions, to bring his students to Wells at Trinity 1915, and the Principal of Leeds Clergy School invited the students at Wells to join him in his northern city. None of these plans materialised, however, and the College struggled on

at Wells in sadly attenuated numbers under the management of Mr. Lightfoot.

Students at Wells have many grateful memories of their landladies in the Vicars' Close who did so much to make their residence at Wells comfortable and happy. We must not, therefore, forget these friends of ours nor fail to realise that, for the landladies also, the prospect of a dwindling College was not without alarm. Moreover, the Trustees and Governors were able to feel a very genuine sympathy with these good ladies, because the College had hitherto never failed to supply student-lodgers at least to those houses which belonged to the Trustees. These anxieties, however, were happily soon dispelled; for it was quickly evident that the demand for lodgings at Wells during the War would certainly be very considerable. Many officers employed in the neighbourhood brought their families into the city, and many summer visitors and tourists, who were unable to go abroad and who shunned the districts where air-raids were to be dreaded, found in the quiet precincts of the Vicars' Close such peacefulness and safety as were doubly prized in such a time of war.

Those who have only known Wells in its normal condition of "rest and quietness" would find it hard to picture to themselves the conditions of College life at this trying period. There were, indeed, during 1915 a few men in residence, varying from twelve to eight, but the number was very largely exceeded by those absent members of the College who, seldom absent from our thoughts at Wells, were serving in the Forces as Chaplains or as combatants, and from these latter the news came through from day to day of dangers and wounds and death. Thus in this year (1915) two Wells men fell in Flanders, (the Rev.) Major Hugh Speke (student 1901) and (the Rev.) Lieut. Charles Jelinger Symons (student 1913).



The Principal, meanwhile, was fully occupied with parochial work at Liverpool, although he maintained his guidance of the College affairs so far as his distance from the city of Wells permitted; from time to time he also attended the meetings of the Trustees and presented to them his wise and informing Reports. For the daily routine of the work, and for the performance of all the business which could only be transacted at Wells, the College owes a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Lightfoot. He, with the help of Mr. Porcher, who was now the Prebendary and Rector of Dinder, succeeded in giving all the lectures and all the supervision which the small body of students demanded.

And here let it be noted in passing that in 1915 Archdeacon E. L. Bevan (student 1885) was consecrated Bishop-Suffragan of Swansea, and Archdeacon Le Fanu (student 1894) was made the Bishop-Coadjutor of Brisbane.

Early in the year 1915 Canon Church died, after a short illness, at the ripe age of ninety-two. Reference has been made in an earlier chapter to the unusually wide acquaintance which he possessed with European history and politics, and he had keenly watched those early months of the Great War with an intelligence such as few could bring to bear upon the subject.

Quite recently he had given a lecture to the College upon "Salonika and her Churches," with a combination of accuracy and poetic feeling which was eminently characteristic of him. In those first days of the War, when it was generally expected that the contest between the nations would be decided in a few months, it may be conjectured that Canon Church maintained a wistful hope that he might live to see the map of Europe readjusted. But, as the War went on, and tidings came to hand day by day of horrors and inhumanities such as



never had been conceived before, our old friend became more and more content to sing his *Nunc Dimittis*. His name will always be identified with Wells, where he resided for practically sixty-six years, and with the College with which he had been connected, under one title or another, for almost the same long period of time.

The Minutes of the somewhat frequent meetings of the Trustees and Governors tell a tale of the anxieties and the financial pressure which belonged to the College all through this period. We read of the insurance of the buildings against air-raids; of the difficulty of keeping the tennis-courts in order when the students were so few; and of the consultations and scheming which were necessary to maintain the Staff when the students' fees produced an insufficient income.

In 1916 Prebendary Parsons, upon his appointment as a Chaplain to the Forces, definitely resigned the office of Principal, and into his position the Bishop called Mr. Lightfoot, who had already for a year or more been performing the duties of the Principal during the absence at Liverpool of Mr. Parsons.

The College owes a considerable debt of gratitude to Mr. Parsons for carrying on its fortunes through those critical years. Before the outbreak of the War his great ability, coupled with his wide acquaintance with many departments of knowledge, social and educational, was placed at the service of the College, and several new and interesting experiments were set on foot. When the War came, Mr. Parsons did his utmost to subordinate his own convenience to the financial means of the Trustees, and, when his position at Wells became financially impossible, he sought and found a way to ease the demands upon the funds of the College.

This was the last full year of work (1916) before

the College (at Easter 1917) was closed for a time, and, as regards the number of students, it was indeed "a day of small things." There were only four or five students at any time throughout the year, and the Principal in his Report referred with special commendation to the fact that, though the number was so small, the "Missions" which, since the days of Mr. Gibson, had afforded some opportunity for the men to gain experience of parochial work, were all maintained, if not in their former efficiency, at any rate with much enthusiasm and zeal.

Mr. Lightfoot was now literally single-handed, for Mr. Porcher had gone to France as a Chaplain; and in fact Mr. Lightfoot, in addition to his responsibilities at Wells, was now also in charge of Mr. Porcher's parish of Dinder.

During these sad and anxious days it was a satisfaction to realise how nobly the College was taking its part in the War. No less than one hundred and ten former students joined up as Chaplains in the first two years of the War, and of these one (Mr. Barry) received the D.S.O., while to three others the Military Cross was assigned, viz. to Messrs. H. C. M. Campbell, C. W. O. Jenkyn and C. L. Money-Kyrle. This latter honour had also been gained by Mr. Blaksley, who, having been a student when the War broke out, at once joined the Army as a combatant. On a later page a full list will be found of the students who fell in the War, to whom a beautiful Memorial has been placed in the College Library; but already, in 1916, the College had contributed generously to the noble catalogue of those who had given their lives for their country. Eight had already fallen, among whom may be specially mentioned the Rev. R. F. Callaway, who was a student at Wells so long ago as 1896, and who surrendered the work which he had long carried on in Kaffraria to enlist as a combatant; while another was Mr. J. M. T. Stock, who, like Mr. Blaksley, had



been actually in residence at Wells in August 1914.

During the years of the War, such records as these take the place, in the Annual Reports, of the names of those who formerly were volunteering from year to year for (may we not say?) the no less noble and, in some cases, the no less heroic work in the Mission Field: the absence of such volunteers during this period, though fully accounted for, reminds one of the shortage of workers in the Foreign Ministry of the Church as well as in the Ministry at home, which was among the many deplorable incidents of that time of War. But we ought to recall the fact that it was in 1916 that Canon Maxwell Gumbleton, who had been a student in 1895 and, later, had been Vicar of Chippenham, left England to be consecrated as Bishop of Ballarat. The obituary of the year 1916 was a heavy one, even apart from the War, and included the names of some of the very early students, such as Messrs. Welby (1843) and Robert Hole (1846), and some of the most patriotic sons of Wells, such as Messrs. Upperton (1851) and G. A. Robins (1856).

The year 1917 witnessed the closing of the College for a time. It was with the greatest reluctance that the Trustees and Governors took this important and melancholy step; but, in fact, it was the acceptance of the inevitable. The financial position was enough by itself to compel the authorities to follow this course. But, in addition to this, it did not appear to be justifiable, at such a time of stress, to retain the services of a priest to superintend so small a number of students as were now in residence at Wells. In December 1916 there were four students, and these were shortly reduced to three, and then to two. The records of this period reveal the intense unwillingness of the Trustees to consent even to a temporary break in the continuity of the College, and the decision was deferred from meeting to meeting.



## 92      **The History of Wells Theological College**

The College was too full of vitality to submit without many a struggle to be reduced to a condition of passive existence, even if it were to be only for a time.

Easter 1917 was the date of the closing of the College. Mr. Lightfoot, the Principal, left Wells to become the domestic Chaplain of Bishop Talbot of Winchester, and the Dean of Wells kindly undertook to take charge of the College Library.

Happily the doors of the College were not long closed, and, even during these twenty months or so of suspended animation, the chronicles of the business meetings of the Trustees and Governors show clearly that the life of the College was not extinct. Nor was the Principal's Annual Report omitted during this time; for, indeed, although there were no students in the Vicars' Close, there were many matters worth the telling full of pride or of sorrow to all connected with Wells. Thus in 1917 Chancellor Holmes died, being himself, as recorded elsewhere, an indirect victim of the horrors of the War; and into his place, as Canon Residentiary and Chancellor, the Bishop appointed the Rev. G. A. Hollis, whose return to Wells was soon destined to bring renewed good fortune to the College. It was at this time that the very valuable books of Chancellor Holmes were purchased by some generous friends of the College, headed by the Right Honourable H. Hobhouse, who was himself one of the Governors, and incorporated in the Library of the College. Another name which should be honourably mentioned in the obituary of this period is that of Bishop Earle, who, after having served with distinction for twelve years as Suffragan to the Bishop of London with the title of Bishop of Marlborough, became Dean of Exeter in 1900; he was a student at Wells in 1857 and was always loyal in his love of the College. Another who should be

commemorated is Bishop Llewellyn Jones (student 1863), who for thirty-nine years presided over the Diocese of Newfoundland, and who seldom failed to write an annual letter to the Wells Missionary Association. Nor ought we to forget the great loss which the College sustained in this year (1917) in the death of Frederick Brymer, the Archdeacon of Wells. Mr. Brymer was a student of the College in 1873 and, except for the first three years of his ministry, he spent the whole of his life in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, becoming Archdeacon in 1899. He was a man of considerable business capacity, with a wide knowledge of affairs, and, as a regular attendant at the meetings of the Governors, his practical ability was of great value to the College.

Other devoted friends of Wells who died in 1917 were Canon Penrhyn, who was a student so long ago as 1851, and Prebendary Hayes Robinson, the Vicar of Burnham (student in 1897).

On the other hand, it is pleasant to remember that it was in 1918 that the Rev. A. H. Anstey (student 1897) was consecrated as Bishop of Trinidad. Dr. Anstey had previously been Principal of St. Boniface College at Warminster for six years, and had been called from there in 1910 to become the Principal of Codrington College, Barbadoes, where he occupied the position once held by Canon Pinder, who will always be remembered with reverent affection as the first Principal of Wells Theological College.

The date of the re-opening of the College was February 14, 1919. This happy event was marked by a special service in the Vicars' Close Chapel on February 15, when the Bishop (Dr. Kennion) was present and the Archdeacon of Wells (Venerable W. Farrer, student 1885) gave an address. At once the Missions at Greenore, Southover and Launcherly were revived, and, soon after, those at Dulcote and the Cottage Hospital were added to the list.



## 94      **The History of Wells Theological College**

Other signs of renewed life became quickly manifest, and the College rapidly gathered up the threads of its former activities. There were now ten students in residence, all of whom had seen service in the Army. One of these, Mr. J. E. Strong, had finished his course at the College when the War broke out, he had in fact passed his examination for Deacon's Orders, and it is due to Mr. Strong to say how much his experience of the Wells life in the past was instrumental in re-establishing the College without any break in its spirit and ideals. The College Staff consisted of Mr. Lightfoot, who had returned from Farnham to his former post as Principal, and with him was associated as "Lecturer" the Rev. G. A. Hollis, who, it will be remembered, had succeeded Dr. Holmes as Canon and Chancellor of the Cathedral. This arrangement, however, lasted only for a short time: before the summer was over Mr. Lightfoot was appointed "Visitors' Fellow" at Lincoln College, Oxford.

Mr. Lightfoot will always be remembered at Wells with great esteem as one who, although not himself a student of the College, was able to a remarkable degree to admire and assimilate the spirit of the place. Few men could have shown a more appreciative understanding of the "Wells tradition." It might, indeed, be almost said that no one has done more to carry on that tradition than Mr. Lightfoot; for, at a time when the College life was at its lowest ebb, he strenuously maintained the old esprit de corps, and, when the College once more began its work, he, ably seconded by Mr. Strong, and by Chancellor Hollis, who represented the Wells tradition of an earlier date, was careful to restore the College life upon the old lines.

The Bishop called Canon Hollis to take the place which Mr. Lightfoot was vacating, and Chancellor Hollis appointed the Rev. Archibald Howard Cullen to be the Chaplain. Mr. Cullen was a graduate of



London University with the degree of Bachelor of Science, and, later, obtained a First Class in the Theological Tripos at Cambridge: afterwards, during the War, he did work of more than ordinary excellence as a Chaplain to the Forces in France. He threw himself heart and soul into the life at Wells, at that time of singular difficulty, and gave effective help in the task of settling the College into a course of peace and order. But, alas, in 1922, the illness of his wife compelled Mr. Cullen to leave Wells and to go to South Africa.

Other alterations were soon found necessary besides the changes in personnel, and these alterations were such as, in other hands, might well have transformed the entire character of the place.

In days before the War there were more than forty sets of rooms available for students in the Vicars' Close, but, during the War, some houses in the Close passed into private hands, while, in the case of others, circumstances made it impossible for students to be received. In short, there were now only twenty-two sets of rooms available for the use of students, and of these, only fifteen could always be relied upon. The problem, therefore, which faced the Principal was reminiscent of the familiar conundrum which asks how a certain number of horses can be stabled in a smaller number of stalls. Fortunately, at this juncture, Mr. Tudway, of Milton Lodge, offered his beautiful house, "The Cedars," on lease or purchase for the use of the College. Wells men will be able to recall the house to mind, a handsome, stone-built edifice looking south upon the group of cedar trees on the lawn across the road, and standing at the junction of the North Liberty and College Lane; the position is a fine one and eminently convenient as regards access to the Vicars' Close, the Cathedral and all the other daily resorts of the students. It was an anxious decision which the Trustees and Governors were now called upon to make. A special

## 96      **The History of Wells Theological College**

meeting was held on July 28, 1919, and it was agreed that "The Cedars" should be taken on a twenty-one years' lease, terminable at the end of seven or fourteen years.

Then there followed the task of equipping the house for its new occupation, and no easy task it was, considering that it had to be carried out rapidly and with severe financial limitations. The house had been used during the War as a Red Cross Hospital, with the natural result that it now needed redecoration from basement to attics; additional bathrooms were also required and a system of electric lighting had to be installed. The premises were handed over to the College on September 29, 1919, and on October 24, when the Michaelmas Term began, the students on their return to Wells found the house in practically perfect order—decorated, furnished and ready for their use. By what magic this lightning transformation had been accomplished it would be hard to say, but it was an achievement for which the Principal, the Secretary (Prebendary Lance) and the Lady Superintendent (Miss Cashmore) deserve the cordial thanks of all who are concerned. A few days after the beginning of the Term, on October 28, a Service of Benediction was held in "The Cedars." Unfortunately the Bishop of the Diocese was not well enough to be present: his place was taken by the Bishop of Taunton (Dr. de Salis), who had been recently appointed a Governor of the College. The service was an impressive one, and was attended not only by the students and others officially connected with the College, but also by a number of friends from the city of Wells. A few days later, the Diocesan Conference assembled at Wells, and the Trustees and Governors welcomed the members of the Conference to an Evening Party at "The Cedars," in order that the whole Diocese might become acquainted with the new "Home" of the College, and with the



future potentialities which such a stately Home may well imply. The house contains rooms for eighteen students, with a common dining-room and sitting-room, besides accommodation for the Vice-Principal. All of these are pleasant chambers, and most of them are handsome and sunny. On the north side of the house the lawn and fields afford abundant space for playing-fields, which will add enormously to the amenities of the College life.

The first member of the Staff to occupy rooms in "The Cedars" was the Rev. Edward Herbert Strong, who joined the College as Vice-Principal in the autumn of 1919. Mr. Strong's equipment for his post was a distinctly adequate but rather an unusual one. After taking his degree in the University of New Zealand, he obtained a Scholarship at St. John's College, Oxford, where he took the degree of M.A. and B.Litt., and then passed through Cuddesdon College. From there, after serving as assistant curate in a parish near Birmingham, he returned to New Zealand as Sub-Warden of St. John's College, Auckland, where he remained till the War recalled him to Europe. He held the office of Vice-Principal with great benefit to the College, but, alas, for one year only. In the autumn of 1920 family reasons recalled him once more to New Zealand, whence, soon after, he was called to be Archdeacon of Tonga and to carry on in that island the work of the late Bishop Willis.

We have several times called attention in previous chapters to the appropriate occurrence of the Triennial Festivals at times of great importance to the College. Such, on more than one occasion, has been the coming of a new Principal, to whom the Festival has offered an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the former students, an opportunity which has been greatly appreciated both by him and by them. Similarly, in 1919, the Triennial was an announcement known and read of all men



that the College had returned to its old life, and an invitation to the students of former days to come and see not only the new Principal—who was indeed an old friend under a new name—but also the changes and adaptations which the settlement into “The Cedars” had introduced. It was a notable gathering, the more so because it represented the revival of a Festival which had not been held since 1914. The Bishop of Ely (Dr. Chase) preached a striking sermon, and the Bishop of Bath and Wells and Mrs. Kennion gave a Garden Party which will be long remembered with gratitude by those who attended it. It was the last of many proofs of the Bishop’s goodwill towards the College, of which he had been the “Visitor” for twenty-six years, and over which he had appointed no less than five Principals.

About a hundred former students attended the meeting, and on the following morning an extremely interesting conference upon Foreign Missions took place at “The Cedars,” at which the Bishop of Adelaide (Dr. Thomas), the Bishop of North Queensland (Dr. Feetham) and other former students of the College spoke.

Among other incidents in the year 1919 should be recorded the death of Bishop Alfred Willis (student 1858), who was consecrated Bishop of Honolulu in 1872 and held that See for thirty years. After his retirement, when nearly seventy years of age, he went as a missionary to Tonga, and worked there strenuously until his death.

To this year also belong the consecration of Archdeacon Southwell (student 1884) as Bishop-Suffragan of Lewes, and of the Rev. L. N. Fisher (student 1904) as Bishop of Lebombo. Dr. Donaldson—who alone among Wells men has held the position of an Archbishop—returned in this year from the Diocese of Brisbane to become the Bishop of Salisbury. When Dr. Southwell was consecrated as

Bishop he resigned his office of Provost of Lancing, and into his place, thus vacated, Prebendary Lance was appointed, who, since 1911, has acted as Hon. Sec. to the Trustees and Governors. Fortunately this new appointment, though it removed Mr. Lance from the Diocese of Bath and Wells, did not deprive the College of his invaluable service.

These recent years, since the College was reopened, have not been without their special anxieties. The number of men offering themselves for Ordination has seriously diminished, and Wells has shared with other Theological Colleges a decrease in the number of applicants for admission. Unavoidable changes in the Staff at Wells have also added not a little to the Principal's perplexities. Mr. Strong, as has been said, after only one year's work at the College, was recalled to his home in New Zealand by urgent family affairs; and Mr. Cullen, the Chaplain, was compelled to leave England and to seek in South Africa the restoration of his wife's health.

For three terms the Principal resided in "The Cedars" and carried on the work of the College single-handed: he received, however, very valuable help as regards the lectures from Prebendary McClean of Dinder and from the Rev. J. E. Strong, curate of Burnham. The Dean of Wells (Dr. Armitage Robinson), who, since his coming to Wells, has been ever ready to give effective and stimulating help, now, at this time of strain, came forward with fresh and welcome offers of assistance. In particular, it has been his kind practice from time to time to invite the students to the Deanery to discuss certain subjects with him, and these informal conferences have been found extraordinarily useful and illuminating. The College has also to thank the Dean for more than one visit from the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, when a guest at the Deanery, has met the men in the common-room and has addressed them with a kindness and a directness upon matters of



present-day importance which will be long remembered.

In August 1921 the Staff was reinforced by the appointment, as Vice-Principal, of the Rev. Harold Bryant Salmon, who, after taking a First Class in the Theological Tripos at Jesus College, Cambridge, was a student of the College in 1919. Before the War he was attached as a teacher to the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel at Allahabad.

In 1922 the full complement was reached by the Rev. Hugh Parnell becoming Chaplain in place of Mr. Cullen. Mr. Parnell is an M.A. of Queens' College, Cambridge, where he took a Second Class in the Theological Tripos; he was afterwards a master in Stonehouse School, Broadstairs. He is no stranger to Wells, for he undertook temporary work at the College during the summer terms of 1919 and 1920.

We now have traced the stream of the College Life from that remote Service in 1840, when a few only-half-consciously-prophetic men met in the Chapel in the Vicars' Close to commend their scheme to God. We have watched its gradual but, on the whole, its steady growth until the students past and present are numbered by thousands and the sun never sets upon their work. Not the least impressive part of the College Calendar, as printed until recent years, was the large number of those against whose names an obelus was placed, showing that they had left this world to join the Church Expectant. These names tell of the advancing age of the College and of the "cloud of witnesses" by which the College is surrounded. Such names should be an inspiration and a summons to us who come after to follow in their steps, and to maintain that character for thoroughness and independent thought which is not unjustly claimed as "the Wells tradition."



## CHAPTER VII

### FINANCE

BEFORE we close this brief History, it may be of interest to say a little about the business concerns of the College. And, indeed, it would be very wrong to do otherwise; for the gratitude of all the friends of the College is due, and should be generously expressed, to all those who, whether as Trustees, as Governors, or as Hon. Secretaries, have devoted ungrudgingly their time and labour to the task of managing its affairs.

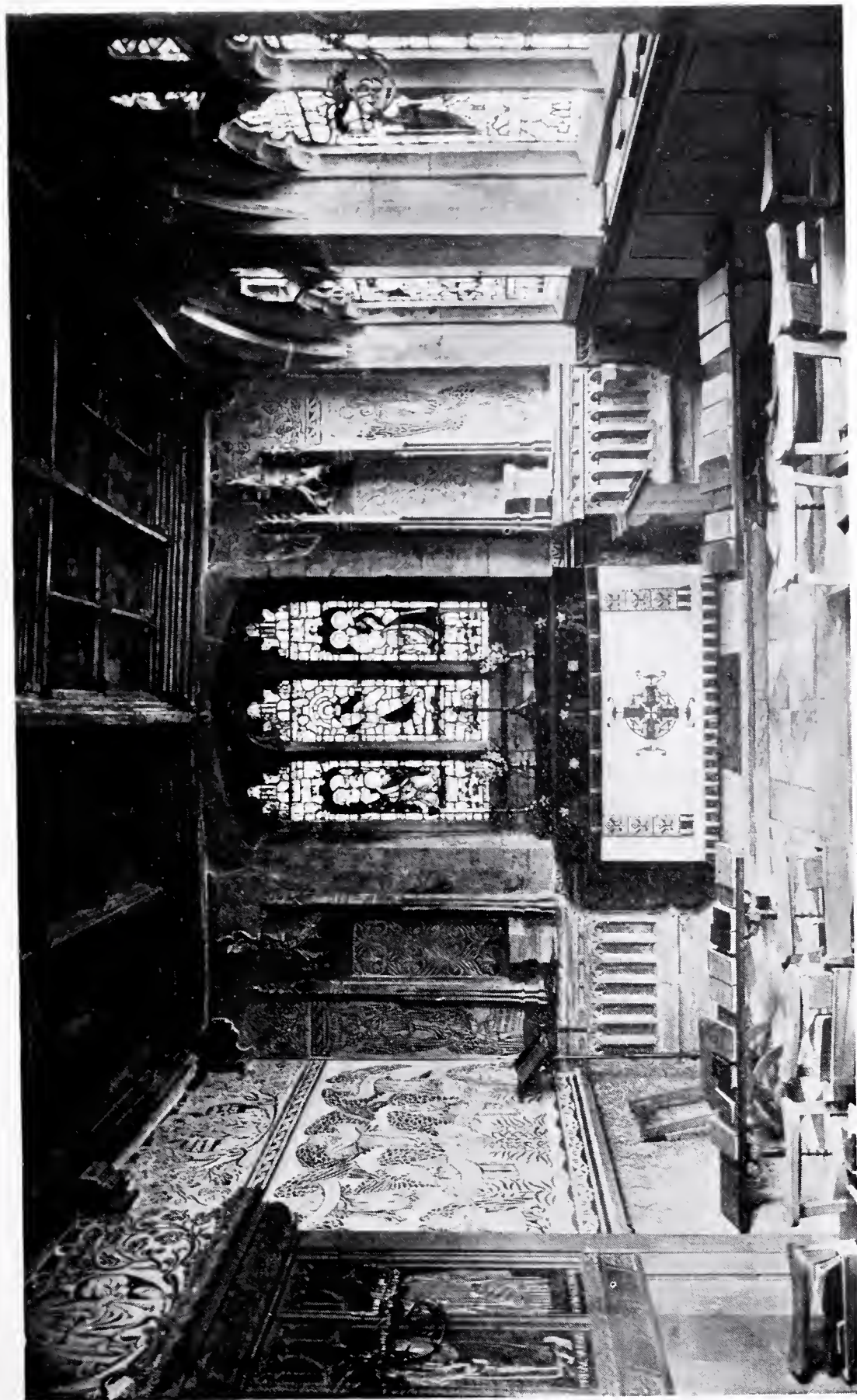
It is true that the property of the College is not extensive. But the War has taught us, even if we did not know it before, that a small income does not necessarily bring with it an easy mind. At any rate it is certain that there have been times in the life of the College, sometimes measured by years, when the exiguous condition of its finances has called for much care and skill on the part of its Managers; and we cannot be too thankful to those who faced those periods of perplexity with so much courage and success. At first, of course, the College owned no property. It is stated in our first chapter that Archdeacon Brymer said in discussing the possibilities of founding such an Institution: "I would gladly give £1000 if I could see Pinder set up as Principal of a Theological College." To which Mr. F. H. Dickinson answered that he would like to join him in his enterprise. We may feel sure, therefore, that the first Founders of the College were ready to be as generous as they certainly were

## 102    **The History of Wells Theological College**

prescient. But it did not enter into their scheme to form an endowment. The circumstances of those early endeavours did not seem to demand a large outlay, and what money was needed was no doubt forthcoming from the purses of these and other friends. The housing of the College was soon provided for. Chancellor Law, to whom his father, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, had assigned the house at the East End of the Cathedral, was prompt to offer it for the use of the Principal, but the house did not become, and never can become, the property of the College. The house, in fact, constitutes a "Rib," a word, by the way, which is not used in connection with any other Cathedral but Wells, and which means a house (now vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners) which is at the disposal of the Bishop, who can give it, for life, to any Prebendary whom he wishes to call into residence. Successive Bishops have collated the Principal of the College for the time being into the possession of this house, and, in this way, have provided a home for him or for some other member of the Staff. As Mr. Pinder, the first Principal, soon became a Canon Residentiary of the Cathedral, and so came into possession of an official house, the "Rib" was made available for the use of the Vice-Principal, and as such the Rev. E. Huxtable and, after him, the Rev. G. M. Church lived in it for a good many years.

Further, the Dean and Chapter permitted the College to use the Lady Chapel for the daily services until 1849, when the Bishop gave the College the use of the Palace Chapel for this purpose. Similarly, the room over the Eastern Cloister was, from the first, used for the lectures by arrangement with the Dean and Chapter. In this way the necessary buildings were provided for the College. The students, meanwhile, lived in lodgings in the Close





*Photograph by Dawkes and Partridge*

INTERIOR OF THE CHAPEL IN THE VICARS CLOSE





and elsewhere, and their fees provided the salaries of the Staff and the other expenses of maintenance.

Thus the earliest property which the College possessed was the sum of £2500 which was subscribed as a Memorial of Canon Pinder's work at Wells, when he resigned the office of Principal in 1865. And this "Pinder Memorial," as has been recorded, was placed in the hands of special Trustees, and was not merged in the general property of the College till 1896.

Later, the Trustees of the College came into possession of other sums of money by the gift or bequest of friends. Dean Plumptre had intended to leave £1000 to the College by will, but, instead, he gave this sum during his life, in 1889, in order that the money might be at once allotted to the fund which was being then collected for the purchase and restoration of the "Archdeacon's House," which is now the Library.

In 1892, on the death of Mrs. Pinder, the College received £1000 under the will of the first Principal. And in 1895 Miss Jane Grafton gave a legacy of £2000 to found an Exhibition in memory of her brother, who was Vice-Principal from 1861 to 1875.

These sums were invested, and were increased from time to time by the addition of money accruing from surplus income; though there were times when capital had to be sold out to meet current expenses, or to purchase or enfranchise house property. The income of the College from capital endowments has, therefore, never been of a substantial character and at the present time all such income has ceased.

Meanwhile, property of another kind gradually came into the hands of the College Trustees. In 1872 the Pinder Trustees bought the freehold of No. 16, Vicars' Close, and in 1875 a lease for fifty years was taken of the Chapel in the Vicars' Close.

## 104    **The History of Wells Theological College**

Shortly after two leasehold houses in the Close were purchased by a former student and given to the Trustees of the College on condition that they should enfranchise them. There were at that time, and perhaps there are still, certain houses in the Close which were held on lease from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and it was only to the Trustees of the College that the Commissioners allowed the privilege of purchasing the freehold. The original proposal of the donor was that the houses should be exchanged with the Vicars for the house on the west side of the Chapel, but this plan was found to be impracticable. Gradually, in this and other ways, buildings came into the hands of our Trustees, until, at the present time, the College holds five houses in the Close, of which four are freehold, besides the stately "Archdeacon's House" on the Cathedral Green, which was purchased and restored to become the Library under the auspices of Principal Gibson, and the fine house next to it, which was purchased from Mr. Elwes in 1889, and is now rented by the Dean and Chapter for the use of the Cathedral Choir School. Together with these, the Trustees hold some pieces of freehold garden-ground attached to the two large houses mentioned above, or lying at the back of the houses on the western side of the Vicars' Close. And, recently, the College has acquired the lease of Mr. Tudway's beautiful house and grounds called "The Cedars," in which, as has been narrated, a portion of the body of students is now residing, and where ample space is afforded for cricket and other games. The College has thus a substantial share in the possession of those noble and interesting houses for which Wells is so widely and justly famed, and the importance of the fact is very great. It may, of course, be objected that ancient houses do not constitute a very lucrative kind of property : such buildings are in constant need of



repair, and the cost of this not infrequently exceeds the amount of the rent. This is perfectly true. From a purely business point of view it might be considered prudent to diminish rather than to increase the amount of property of this nature. But those who desire to see the College firmly established in its present beautiful surroundings will appreciate the importance of owning these buildings—"beati possidentes"—and they will not look upon the price paid for such a position as if it were excessive or thrown away.

It is a rather curious fact that there is no existing record of any Meeting of the Trustees of the College before October 9, 1852—twelve years after the College was founded. It is hardly to be supposed that no business meetings occurred before that date. But the absence of any documentary evidence of any such meeting is strange, and the more so, because the chronicle of the actual doings of the College itself have been most carefully preserved ever since the opening in May 1840. There is a book dated May 1, 1840, and endorsed "Wells Diocesan College," in which Mr. Pinder ("the Professor," as he calls himself at that time) has made a record, written almost from day to day, of the names and University-standing of each student as he arrived at Wells; of the lectures which were delivered in the College; of all the arrangements which were made from time to time with regard to services and private tuition, and of all the other matters connected with the method and work which the Principal had in hand. But, until October 1852, there are no Minutes existing of any Meeting of the Governing Body. Onwards from that date we have a fairly complete account of the financial position and of the business transactions of the College. The Body of Trustees as they first come before us are the Bishop of Bath and Wells (Dr. Bagot) in the Chair, Canon Pinder,

F. H. Dickinson, Esq., the Rev. Lord John Thynne, F. H. Markland, Esq., D.C.L., and the Archdeacon of Bath (Dr. Gunning).

From that time until 1881 it was the custom of the Trustees to co-opt into their Body such persons as seemed to them proper without regard to their total number. But occasionally, as we learn from the Minutes, there were doubts expressed as to the legality of this practice, and in 1880 the Hon. Sec. (Mr. Coleman) was instructed to examine the Minute Books from the beginning, and to report upon the practice of the Trustees and the reasons which had guided them as regarded this matter. It was then that Mr. Coleman discovered, and recorded, that there was no trace of any earlier meeting of the Trustees before October 1852. As the result of Mr. Coleman's researches the whole question was threshed out at a Meeting of the Trustees on December 19, 1881, and Canon Bernard proposed the following Resolution, which was passed unanimously :

“ That this Meeting, having reviewed the original constitution of the College limiting the number of Trustees to five, and the Resolutions under date of 1873 which purposed to increase that number to ten, hereby resolves that the latter change appears to have been *ultra vires*; and that the Trustees now legally existing are the Bishop (Lord A. C. Hervey) and the Principal (both of them *ex officio*) and Mr. Dickinson, the Archdeacon of Bath (Mr. Browne), and Mr. Luttrell, who were elected previously to the above-mentioned Resolution; and that the Governing Body consists, and shall consist, of the Trustees with the addition of such other Members as are now, or shall from time to time, be joined with them by Resolution of the Governing Body duly passed.”

On January 14, 1888, by a further Resolution, the title of the Governing Body was defined as

“ The Trustees and Governors.” And so the matter stands to-day : there are five “ Trustees,” and to them are added eight or more “ Governors,” who sit with the Trustees as having equal powers of voting on general subjects, but as having no financial responsibilities, and therefore having no legal authority in matters concerning the property of the College.

The question was re-opened by the Trustees and Governors in June 1896, when the “ Pinder Trust ” was dissolved and the funds of that Trust were merged in the general capital of the College. The question was then discussed in connection with another proposal, viz. that the property of the College should be placed in the hands of the “ Diocesan Trust.” After a full discussion it was decided that the College Trust should, as hitherto, remain separate from the Diocesan Trust, and that the number of the Trustees of the College should continue to be five, according to the Resolution of December 19, 1881.

In attendance upon this Governing Body at their periodical meetings is the Hon. Sec. of the College, who now for many years has been himself either a Trustee or a Governor. The Secretary's office is a very important and responsible one, for, not only has he to perform such clerical duties as obviously belong to his position, but he also is commissioned from time to time to carry out many delicate and weighty tasks under the instructions of the Trustees and Governors. It would be difficult, therefore, to over-estimate the obligation which the College is under to these gentlemen, who in succession have filled this office ; who, unpaid and standing in the background, have done yeoman service during all these years ; and no history of the College would be complete without some record of their names and services.

The first Hon. Sec. was the Rev. G. H. U. Fagan,



Vicar of Rodney Stoke, who occupied the position from 1849 to 1866. Those were days of prosperity when the fame of the College and of its first Principal, Mr. Pinder, was drawing many students to Wells. On the other hand, it was a period during which the Governing Body was carefully feeling its way, and, as we peruse the Minutes of the Meetings, we can read between the lines a degree of caution which to us of to-day seems almost laughable. For instance, bearing in mind that many admirable men have passed through Wells who had not graduated in any University, it is rather funny to read how at the Meeting of the Trustees in 1864 the Bishop considered it necessary to explain (and almost to apologise for the act) that he has "given his sanction" as "an exceptional case" to the admission of a distinguished graduate, a Bachelor of Science, of *London University*! But though we may smile at such excessive caution, we may well be thankful that our Trustees, in those early days, were content to move slowly forward and to lay the foundations of the Wells tradition with due care and deliberation.

Mr. Fagan held his office till the resignation of Canon Pinder and until the appointment of Mr. Burney; he had combined with the Secretaryship of the College the more laborious office of Secretary to the Diocesan Societies, and he now felt that the increasing labours of the latter task must compel him to sever his connection with the Trustees and Governors.

He was succeeded by the Rev. John Heyrick Macaulay, who had been a student of the College in 1855 and who was in 1866 the Vicar of Highbridge. He held office till 1871, when he left the Diocese to become Vicar of Wilshamstead in Bedfordshire. He was afterwards Vicar of Dunstable, Hon. Canon of Ely, and Proctor for the Diocese of Ely in Convocation. He died in 1914. Thus his term of service only lasted for five years, but it was a period

of considerable tension and anxiety. The financial condition of the College, depending as it did almost entirely upon the fees of the students, was throughout these years extremely precarious. It was a matter of difficulty to maintain the necessary Staff. And we may feel sure that Mr. Macaulay, who was an enthusiastic son of the College, shared to the utmost the perplexities of the Governors during those lean years. It was at this time (1866), and on account of the financial pressure, that the Rev. F. S. Moberly was appointed Vice-Principal of the College. He served with great benefit to all concerned till his death in 1869; but his appointment in the first place was largely due to the fact that he was able to accept a smaller stipend because he was at the same time Priest Vicar in the Cathedral. Various suggestions were made by way of easing our straitened circumstances, and the Bishop (Lord A. C. Hervey) announced that he had interested the Bishops of Salisbury and Exeter in the matter, and had proposed that they should unite with himself in making the College at Wells a joint institution for the training of clergy for these three Dioceses. This scheme, perhaps not unhappily, did not materialise. One practical scheme, however, did emerge from these discussions, namely, that a limited number of non-graduates should be admitted to the College, and should be lodged in a certain house in the Close under the supervision of the junior member of the College Staff. This plan, as has been said, was put into effect in 1872 and was carried on for some years with considerable success.

When Mr. Macaulay left the Diocese in 1871 his place as Secretary was taken by another former student (1861), the Rev. Edward Cecil Coney, who had also succeeded Mr. Macaulay as Vicar of Highbridge. Mr. Coney retained the office till 1875. These were days of rather less pecuniary anxiety than those during which Mr. Macaulay



served. Mr. Coney's term of office was chiefly marked by a revision and restatement of the College Statutes. By this the admission of non-graduates was formally permitted. To this period also belong certain protracted negotiations with the Vicars Choral for a lease of the Hall and Chapel in the Close. These negotiations came to nothing at the time, but they cleared the ground for the leasing of the Chapel at a somewhat later date, and for its consequent restoration. When Mr. Coney resigned the charge of Highbridge in 1874 it was to become assistant curate at St. John's, Red Lion Square, Holborn, where he carried on his work first as curate and then as Vicar till 1902, when he retired from regular parochial responsibilities in consequence of the failure of his health.

His successor as Secretary was the Rev. James Coleman (student in 1854), the Vicar of Allerton, near Cheddar, a good friend of the College and a man of a peculiarly enthusiastic disposition. He acted as Secretary till 1885. In the early part of this period the number of students was small, and, consequently, the perplexities of the Trustees were very considerable. Yet, even in that time of anxiety, there was much to afford encouragement in the evidences given of the devotion of former students to the College. This, it will be remembered, was the time when Mr. Liddell started the idea of an Exhibition Fund, with lasting benefit to the College; and it was during these years of struggle that the restoration of the Chapel in the Vicars' Close was taken in hand and carried through successfully by the generosity of former students and other friends.

The year 1879 was notable for the resignation of the Principalship by Canon Church. Naturally the retirement of one who had for so long presided over the College could not occur without bringing to the authorities a fresh element of concern. The



appointment, however, of Mr. Gibson to the vacant chair speedily put new courage into the hearts of all, and those who had heard of Mr. Gibson's career both at Wells and at Leeds flocked to the College, lifting a load off Mr. Coleman's mind and filling his coffers with gold.

A suggestion was made in 1881 by the Royal Commission upon Cathedrals that our Theological College should be "affiliated" to the Cathedral. Whether the College would have benefited by the addition of any statutory force to the close but informal relation in which the College now stands to the Cathedral may be a matter upon which men may fairly differ. But, at any rate, the Trustees and Governors, after very careful and deliberate consideration, answered the proposal in the negative. And perhaps the great majority of those interested will agree in being thankful that the College has thus retained its entire independence.

In 1879 Mr. Coleman became a Prebendary, and in 1883 he was appointed to be Vicar of Cheddar. The increasing responsibilities of the latter office compelled him to resign his work as Secretary of the College in 1884. About sixteen years later Prebendary Coleman (who had now become "Treasurer" of the Cathedral) resigned his parish owing to age and infirmity, and took up his residence in the Vicars' Close, much to the pleasure and advantage of several generations of students. In 1906 he left Wells to live at Romsey, and there he died in 1913.

When Mr. Coleman completed his term of service in 1884, the Trustees and Governors called on Canon Church to undertake the duties of Secretary, and the call was readily accepted. It was appropriate that one who had already served the College under many titles since 1854, and who had never ceased through all those years to take a close and intimate part in everything connected with Wells,

should now be summoned to work for the College in yet another office. It was not an office of great dignity, but it was one of great usefulness, and on this account it was the better suited to one who never sought to put himself forward, but who was always ready to do what he could to help. And for twenty-seven years (longer than any previous Secretary) Canon Church performed the duties of the post with the skill which belonged to his unique knowledge of the College and of all its traditions.

Financially, this period was an easy one, but it was not without important incidents. Thus in 1888 the ancient "Archdeacon's House" was acquired and transformed into the Library; and in 1889 the Trustees and Governors purchased from Mr. Elwes the house which is now used as the school of the Cathedral choristers. It was also a period in which many changes took place; for the College twice during this time sustained a change of Principal—Mr. Currie came in 1895 and Mr. Goudge was appointed in 1903. Further, in 1894 Lord Arthur Hervey died and Dr. Kennion succeeded him as Bishop of Bath and Wells, and as ex-officio Chairman of the College Trustees. And all these newcomers might well consider themselves fortunate to find as Secretary of the College a man with an encyclopædic acquaintance with everything which had to do with Wells, a man, moreover, who possessed a disposition of such genuine modesty that all dealings with him were as pleasant as they were illuminating. As a resident in Wells during all these years Canon Church was able to do a great deal in the way of overhauling the house property of the College, and the present excellent sanitary condition of the houses in the Vicars' Close owes much to the supervision of the Secretary.

But in 1911 Canon Church felt that the burden of his eighty-eight years constituted a sufficient claim to be relieved of his duties, and to fill his



place the Governing Body appointed Prebendary Edwin Mildred Lance, the Vicar of Barrow-Gurney in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, who had been a student of the College in 1884. Of him it is difficult to speak in adequate terms because he is still living and is still in the active service of the College. If, however, outside testimony may be cited in proof of his business capacity and of his zeal and alertness, it should be said that in 1913 he was made the Provost of the Woodard Schools in the west of England, and that in 1920 he was further promoted—in succession to another Wells man, H. K. Southwell, who is now Bishop of Lewes—to be Provost of Lancing and President of all the Woodard Schools.

During his tenure of office Prebendary Lance has already had abundant opportunity of showing his mettle. Not only has it been his lot to welcome three new Principals—Messrs. Parsons, Lightfoot and Hollis—and to go through the exacting experiences of these times of transition, but the occurrence of the Great War brought him trials and embarrassments such as no Secretary ever had before and, we may well hope and pray, such as no other Secretary in the future will ever be called upon to face. Long may he be able to carry on his important work for Wells!



COPY OF THE INSCRIPTION ON THE WAR  
MEMORIAL IN THE COLLEGE LIBRARY

In memory of the following members of Wells  
Theological College who gave up their lives in the  
War 1914-1919:—

Hon. M. B. PEEL.	W. L. S. DALLAS.	B. R. STREETEN.
R. F. CALLAWAY.	E. W. TREVOR.	E. F. PRIOR.
H. SPEKE.	A. B. MACE.	A. A. STEWARD.
G. W. F. MORGAN.	C. H. BELL.	G. SUNDERLAND.
T. G. HOPKYNs.	A. E. ACTON.	C. J. SYMONS.
C. H. SCHOOLING.		J. W. T. STOCK.

*Their name liveth for evermore.*

## INDEX

- ALEXANDER, Archbp., 32  
 Anstey, Bp., 11, 93  
 Archbishop, *see under* surname.  
 Archdeacon, *see under* surname.  
 Archdeacon's House, 37, 57, 104, 112  
 Armitage Robinson, Dean, 39, 75, 99  
 Auckland, Bp., 13  
  
 Bagot, Bp., 105  
 Bell, G. K. A., 83  
 Benson, Archbp., 32  
 Bevan, Bp., 88  
 Bishop, *see under* surname.  
 Brough, J. S. B., 73  
 Brymer, Archdeacon, senior, 2, 4, 101  
 ———, junior, 93  
 Buck, Dr., 64  
 Buckle, Canon, 66  
 Buller, Preb., 70  
 Burney, Preb., 13  
  
 Calendar, 12, 19, 31  
 Callaway, G., 37  
 ———, R. F., 90  
 Cardwell, 23  
 Cedars, The, 41, 95  
 Chapman, Bp., 30  
 Chastel de Boinville, 39, 72, 78  
 Cheshunt, 73  
 Choir School, 27, 104  
 Church, Canon, 7, 14, 15, 34, 38, 45, 78, 88, 111  
 ———, Mrs., 6, 21, 27  
 Clarke, Artist, 21, 59  
 ———, F. A., 59  
 ———, H. S. S., 69, 72  
 Closing of College, 92  
  
 Codrington College, 11, 93  
 Coleman, Preb., 84, 110  
 Coney, E. C., 109  
 Conferences, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42  
 Coode, A., 37, 58  
 Cullen, A. H., 94  
 Currie, Preb., 37, 62-67  
  
 Dean, *see under* surname.  
 de Salis, Bp., 96  
 Dickinson, F. H., 2, 4, 59, 106  
 Dimont, C. T., 76, 82  
 Diocesan Trust, 107  
 Discipline, 8  
 Distinctions—Academical, 73;  
                   Military, 90  
 Donaldson, Archbp., 36, 39, 71, 85, 98  
 Drake, F. W., 63, 69, 72  
  
 Earle, Bp., 52, 92  
 Elwes, Chancellor, 10, 18, 20, 26, 39, 44, 70  
 Exhibition Fund, 56, 64, 67, 71  
  
 Fagan, G., 107  
 Farrer, Archdeacon, 66, 93  
 Feetham, Bp., 42, 81, 98  
 Festing, Bp., 35, 37, 63, 69  
 Fisher, Bp., 98  
 Fowler, G., 47  
 Frere, D., 72  
 ———, W. H., 65  
  
 Gibson, Bp., 25, 33, 37, 38, 41, 45-61, 71  
 Glastonbury, 79  
 Glossop, Archdeacon, 84  
 Gott, Bp., 37, 52, 54, 58  
 Goudge, Dr., 39, 62, 68, 77

- Grafton, Preb., 10, 14, 16, 70  
 Gurdon, Bp., 84
- Hebrew Prize, 56  
 Hervey, Bp., Lord A., 20, 35, 55, 106, 109  
 Hodson, M. O., 65  
 Holbech, Bp., 18, 38, 66, 71  
 Hollis, Chancellor, 40, 41, 59, 63, 64, 69, 76, 85, 92, 94  
 Holmes, Chancellor, 26, 44, 66, 92  
 Huxtable, E., 7, 37
- Jelf, Canon, 75  
 Jex-Blake, Dean, 75  
 Johnson, Bp., 37, 75  
 Jones, Ll., Bp., 92  
 —, Spencer, 38
- Kennion, Bp., 93, 98  
 Knight, Bruce, Bp., 37
- Lady Chapel, 7, 102  
 Lance, Preb., 41, 78, 96, 99, 113  
 Lavington, C. W., 23  
 Law, Chancellor, 2, 4, 102  
 Lecture Room, 24, 34, 102  
 Le Fanu, Bp., 88  
 Legacies, 60, 71, 84, 103  
 Library, 34, 58, 66, 71, 92  
 Liddell, W. W., 56, 64  
 Lightfoot, Bp., 32, 36  
 —, R. H., 39, 78, 88, 89, 94  
 Lonsdale, J., 7  
 Lyttelton, W. H., 30
- Macaulay, J. H., 108  
 Malvern, 52  
 Manning, Archdeacon, 1, 2  
 Marle, R., 76, 80  
 Missions, 50, 93  
 Moberly, Bp., 32  
 —, F. S., 109  
 —, G. H., 44  
 Mount, Archdeacon, 70
- Murray, J. D., 47  
 Music, 64
- Nonconformity, 80  
 Non-Graduates, 25, 109  
 Norris, Bp., 84
- Palace Chapel, 23  
 Parnell, H., 100  
 Parsons, R. G., 39, 86, 89  
 Pedder, W., 7, 60  
 Philipps, Sir J., 80  
 Pinder, Canon, 2, 9, 165  
 Pinder Trust, 10, 103  
 Plumptre, Dean, 35, 57  
 Porcher, G. L., 82, 84, 86, 90  
 Prichard, C. E., 7  
 Principal's House, 5, 102
- Rawlinson, A. E. J., 83  
 Reading Prize, 56, 66  
 Retreats, 43, 51  
 Royal Commission, 111
- Salmon, H. B., 100  
 School Teaching, 74, 84  
 South African War, 65  
 Southwell, Bp., 66, 98  
 Strong, E. H., 97  
 —, J. E., 94, 99  
 Student Christian Movement, 74, 79
- Talbot, Bp., 40, 85  
 Thomas, Bp., 42, 71, 98  
 Trustees and Governors, 107
- Vicars' Close Chapel, 3, 20, 103  
 Vyvyan, Bp., 36
- War Memorial, 90, 114  
 Wells Missionary Association, 17  
 Wells Office Book, 65  
 West, A. N., 17  
 Willis, Bp., 98  
 Winnington Ingram, Bp., 32







PROPERTY OF  
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY



BV4160.W45 E49  
The history of Wells Theological College

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00200 9662